DECEMBER 1972

Saturday Review

ONE DOLLAR

# THE SOCIETY

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Robert Lekachman ★ Nathan Glazer ★ Robert Jay Lifton ★ Francine du Plessix Gray ★ Gloria Emerson
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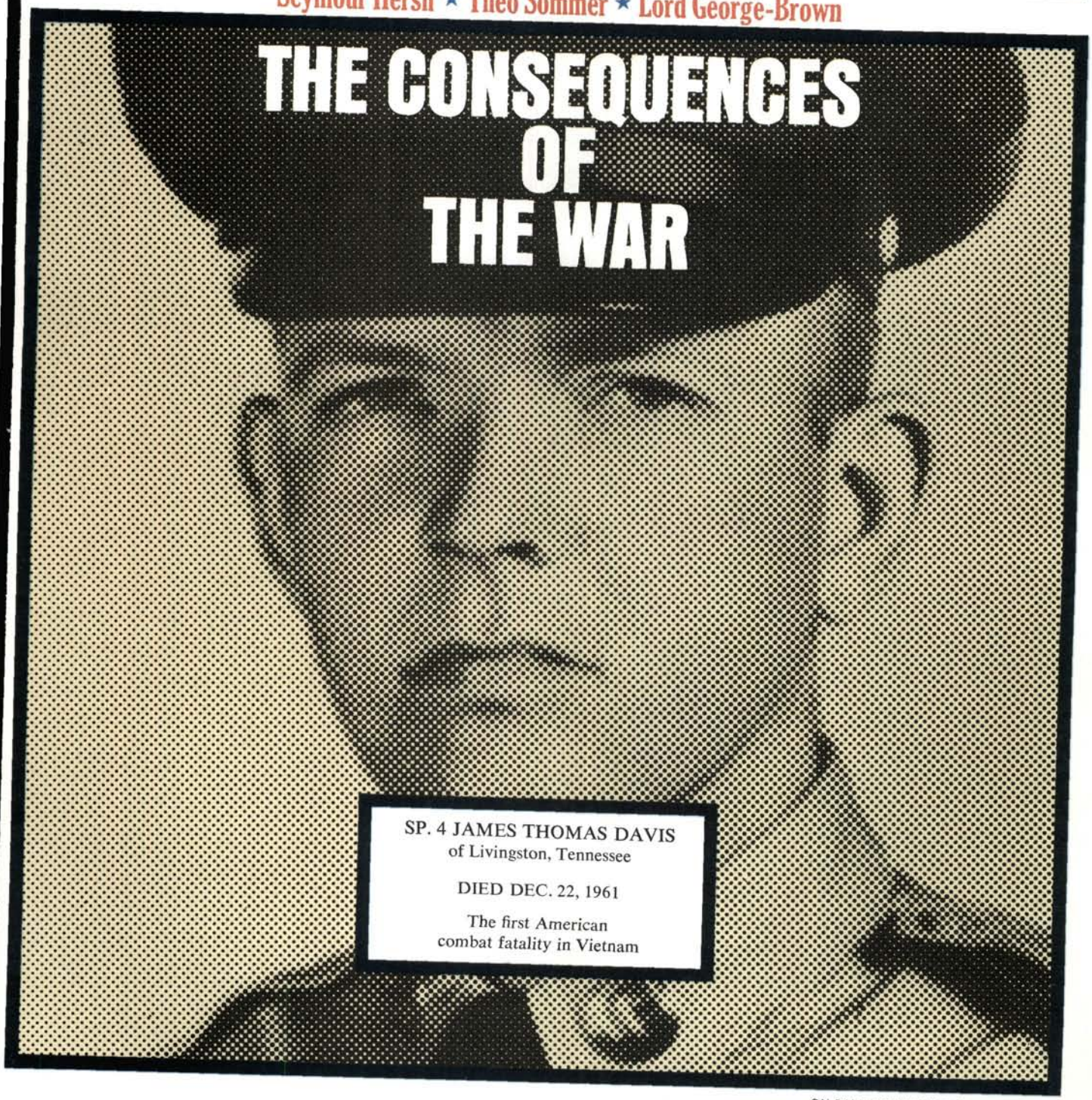


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Saturday Review, Inc., publishes a family of four monthly magazines—Saturday Review The Arts, Saturday Review Education, Saturday Review The Society, Saturday Review Science. Each of these special-interest magazines is available separately at $12 for one year, or all four may be purchased at the combined price of $24 per year.



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The former has happened to me so many times that I vowed never to invest in a movie camera. However, looking over one of our new books, I just may change my mind. The book is How to Make Exciting Home Movies and Stop Boring Your Friends and Relatives. The authors are Ed and Dodi Schultz. Ed Schultz is a professional film maker and the book tells you everything you need to know about equipment and technique, but more important it demonstrates how footage that records your summer vacation, your child's first step, or your parents 50th anniversary can be interesting—even dramatic. The Schultzes show how to develop stories out of family situations and how to make those stories entertaining.

How to Make Exciting Home Movies and Stop Boring Your Friends and Relatives is a book that is written in chatty, lively fashion. It may not turn you into Ingmar Bergman or Mike Nichols, but it will deliver what the title promises.

*L. L. Day*
Editor-at-Large

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SR UP FRONT

NOVEMBER 18, 1972

# The Mastermind as Mouthpiece

BY BARNARD COLLIER

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Henry Kissinger, in his first television speech before the American public, couldn't stop coughing. Every other word he went ka-hem, or aaach, or kuh, kuh, kuh. His eyes were focused on some terrible middle distance, probably the red light just under the lens on the camera. He tried desperately to cover up his accent, but "which" refused to come out anything but "vitch." I went to the kitchen to make a cup of coffee while he was talking, and with his voice unattached to his face, he sounded like a robot groaning two words at a time. Every cell in my brain said that something was wrong if they unveiled Henry Kissinger to make the dramatic announcement of the end of war in our time. This was obviously a panic situation, and Kissinger, who is usually prepared for anything and can hold an audience without a single ah-hem or chuuuch, had had no time to pull himself together properly. "Henry's ass is on the line," my brain said. "If the negotiations fail, then Henry takes the rap."

I went to find out more about negotiations from a man at the Foreign Service Institute who teaches our diplomats how to negotiate. He was a man who has carefully taught our diplomats never publicly to put any part of their anatomy on the line. So he wouldn't let me use his name. I call him Teacher.

"Negotiations in America began with Benjamin Franklin," Teacher said. "He got France on our side in the Revolutionary War, and part of the way he did it was by being very attractive to the ladies of Paris." Teacher sucked in his belly and tapped some invisible ash off the unlighted cigar he plays with to help him break the habit. He gave me a wink like a horny American college professor walking down the Rue de la Paix.

One way our novice diplomats are taught in the classroom, Teacher said, is with a role-playing game called "Panama Canal Negotiations." The authentic canal negotiations have been dragging on now, off and on, for nearly the entire twentieth century.

"You learn," Teacher said, "that you can't project a win-lose situation in negotiations or you lose from the start. The American public thinks that, when you negotiate with foreigners, you have to come away from the table with the foreigners destroyed. But some negotiations can go on almost forever without getting anything settled, and the good diplomat must prepare himself for those."

Negotiators get a lot of notice in the press, but they are rarely dispatched without instructions that are explicit down to the last dot over the last i. Teacher said that, with modern communications, the man sitting at the negotiating table is often called "the mouthpiece" by the "backup men" on the other end of the telephone line in Washington.

We believe that by far the longest part of the road has been traversed... aaach... ah-hem..... we will make our own decisions as to how long we believe a war should be continued... Ka-hew... I think we will stop with the ceasefire and the big guns fall silent, the small guns will remain in action.... Kuh Kuh. Kuh
A.E. Cober

The backup men forego the thrills of sitting down at the table and watching the other guy squirm. The backup men, Teacher said, get their pleasure quietly among their peers in the secret community, and they consider themselves to be the true brains of the negotiation business.

Teacher said that negotiators must, above all, do exactly as they are told. They must never unwittingly give anything away, and they must catch every nuance, tick, blink, intonation, cadence, gesture, and reflex on the other man's part, without being fooled by the other man's culture and strange language. Teacher said he was born in China, where his father was a Protestant missionary. He explained that a Chinese will wave you to him with his hands pointed down, like a man paddling a surf board. An American waves you to him with his hands up, and if you try it the Chinese way, you will see how foolish it feels in our culture. The professional negotiator learns to recognize significant signs in the other man's body language as well as in his own.

"You don't want to give anything away with your body," Teacher said. That accounts for much of the stiff look people associate with professional diplomats and professional poker players.

Teacher said that back in the Kennedy days President Kennedy delivered a speech at the Foreign Service Institute that put diplomats precisely in their place.

"He said, 'You will do the work in the background, and I will take the credit up front. When it works, I will claim it was my idea because I'm a politician. If it fails, I'll blame it on you for the same reason.' "

"Why the hell would anybody want to stay in a nauseating job like that?" I couldn't restrain myself from asking.

Teacher crossed his legs at the knee,

*Barnard Collier, one of our most frequent contributors, is a freelance writer who lives outside of Washington, D.C.*

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straightened his shoulders, pulled in his chin, and dropped an inscrutable yellow curtain in front of his eyes.

"It's not nauseating," Teacher said. "It has great satisfactions for those who can do the work."

"Well, on that basis, who do you think is the world's best diplomatic negotiator?" I asked.

"If you really want to know," Teacher snapped, "it's Chou En-lai."

I thought about what Teacher said for a few days and decided my brain was right when it told me that Kissinger was in trouble, so I called to find out.

The Kissinger voice on the telephone was not coughing, but it was as tight as raw nerve and hardened against any signal of sympathy.

"I think we'll still get an agreement," Kissinger said, in the way you say things to concerned callers when your mother is dying in the hospital.

"I had an idea something was wrong when I heard your speech," I said.

"It was all extemporaneous, almost ad lib," he said. "I had maybe three notes in front of me when I got up there. I was up all night, listening to the news come in."

"Then it did come as a surprise?" I asked.

"Yes," he said. "Hanoi wasn't supposed to release anything under our secret agreement."

"I'm sorry," I said.

"It's okay," Kissinger said. "I think we'll get something."

"Good luck," I said.

Teacher had said that something ominous always happens when people try to play the brains and the mouthpiece at the same time. □

# Taking On Tony Boyle

BY GEORGE VECSEY

EBENSBURG, Pa.—Arnold Miller was machine-gunned on the beaches of Normandy. After his face had been repaired by plastic surgery, he went back to the coal mines of West Virginia. He worked in them for nearly two decades, until he was disabled by black lung disease. This year he's running for president of the United Mine Workers of America. Arnold Miller likes to live dangerously.

A few weeks ago Miller was sleeping in the Daniel Boone Hotel in

*George Vecsey has covered Appalachia for the* New York Times *since 1970.*


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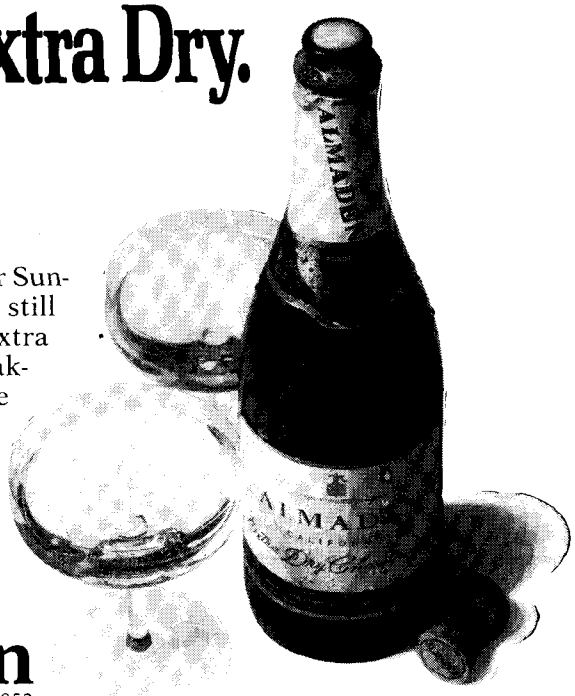

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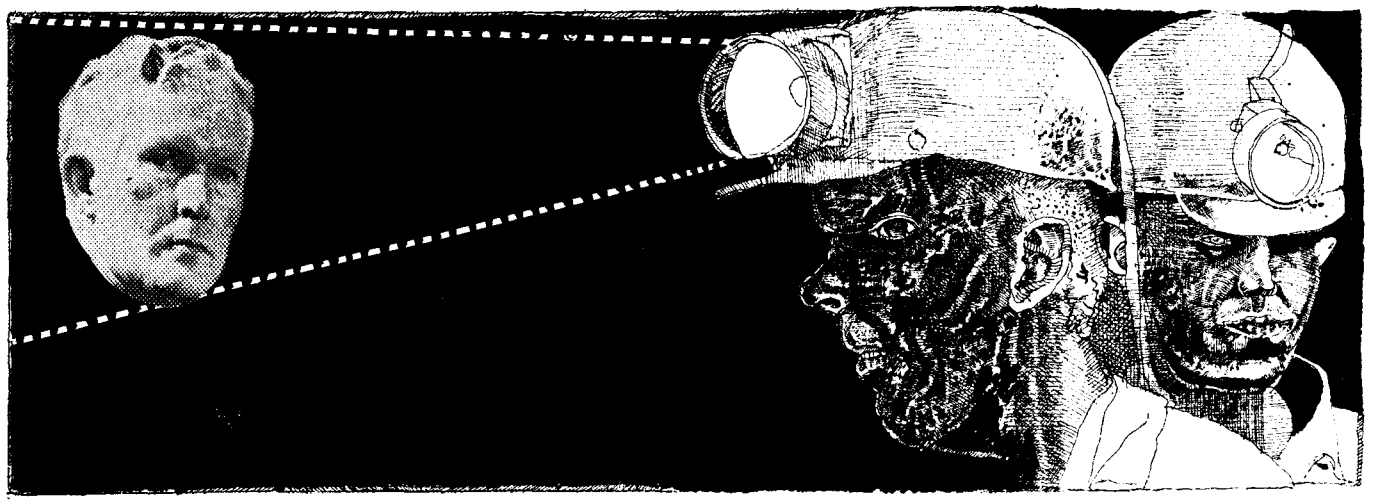

*Arnold Miller: "I say it's time the miners ran their own union."*

Whitesburg, Kentucky. At about three in the morning two men stepped out of a car that bore Harlan County license plates ("Bloody Harlan" is one of the most violent of Kentucky's coal-mining counties), walked into the Daniel Boone, and asked to speak with Mr. Miller. The night clerk had been tipped $20 for just such an emergency; he told the men that no such person was registered there. The stratagem that turned away the two would-be assassins probably also saved them their skins. "If they'd started knocking down my door," Arnold Miller said later, "they would have caught a lot of lead."

He said it softly, and without much emotion, because Arnold Miller is not a flamboyant man. Even his campaign style is low-key. He does not have the fire-and-brimstone style of Joseph A. (Jock) Yablonski, the last man to run against UMW president W. A. (Tony) Boyle. But then Jock Yablonski is dead.

This evening Arnold Miller is playing soccer with three younger men on a grassy field out in the country. He plays hard for five minutes, hustling all over the field, then starts to cough—and that is enough soccer for tonight. Miller sits down in a chair by the edge of a pond. From time to time he pounds his chest as if to loosen coal dust that will never go away. Night is falling fast. Crickets compete with the sound of a huge fan that pushes life-saving air into the mine across the road.

The scene is the trailer retreat of Edward F. Monborne, Miller's campaign manager, during a swing through Pennsylvania. There wasn't supposed to be a UMW election this year. When Jock Yablonski lost in December 1969, Tony Boyle was elected to serve out another five-year term. But Yablonski, his wife, and his daughter were murdered a few weeks after the election, and Yablonski's followers took the union to court. Last May Federal Judge William B. Bryant ordered a new election for December 1–8, to be carried out under strict Labor Department supervision. Boyle and his aides have been screaming about "outsiders" ever since.

One of the "outsiders" who have joined Miller on this swing is Harry Patrick. Chubby and jolly, Patrick is using the last glimmer of light to hook some of the carp in the pond. He is a mine mechanic from Fairmont, West Virginia. His father was crippled and his brother died in mine accidents. Patrick is running for secretary-treasurer of the UMW.

Mike Trbovich, a second "outsider," is napping inside the trailer. With his deeply lined face and wavy, gray hair, Trbovich looks very much the urban politician. In fact, he is a shuttle-car operator from Clarksville, Pennsylvania—Yablonski's home town. Trbovich was Yablonski's campaign chairman in 1969. Now he's running for vice-president of the UMW.

Arnold Miller, the third "outsider," comes from the Cabin Creek section of West Virginia. He was sixteen when he started to work in the mines. At the time his lung disability forced him to retire two years ago, at the age of forty-seven, he was a mine repairman.

"The doctors used to tell us coal dust was good for us," Miller says. Maybe this is an exaggeration. But American doctors were not exactly screaming that coal dust was bad for miners, either. It wasn't until the 1960s that pathologists in the coal region—often foreign-born doctors—started to describe the accumulation of coal and rock dust in the lungs of dead miners. Then a vanguard of pulmonary specialists—most notably, perhaps, Donald Rasmussen of Beckley, West Virginia—began to assert in public that coal dust clogged lungs, thereby imperiling the health of miners.

In 1969 Miller led thousands of Black Lung Association members out of West Virginia mines to stage a march that helped persuade state legislators to pass a law that made black lung a compensable disease. Later that year the U.S. Congress followed suit. Miller still scorns the politicians and the majority of mining-country doctors for being so slow to act, but he saves his special rage for the union leaders he supported, with true mountaineer loyalty, for so many years.

"I'll never forgive them for not telling me about black lung," he says.

Now it is completely dark. Miller and Patrick enter the trailer. Trbovich has waked up from his nap. The three men wash and put on their ties and suit jackets. They are about to visit the coal mines and these rank-and-file candidates want to look like men who can handle the complex affairs of a union.

It hasn't always been easy to campaign in the mines. In 1969 Yablonski was often rebuffed by miners who believed that anybody who wasn't "loyal to Boyle" was a traitor. Sometimes Yablonski was threatened. Nevertheless, he gained 46,000 votes as against Boyle's 80,000—the closest margin in UMW history—and that was according to the union's own, since discredited, reckoning.

The murder and the overturned election seemed to harden Yablonski's people, particularly such supporters as Trbovich, who helped form and later led Miners for Democracy (MFD), a group that has served as a focus for resistance to the UMW hierarchy. Shortly after Judge Bryant set the dates for the new election, dissident miners met in Wheeling, West Virginia, where Miller, whose links are with the Black Lung Association was chosen over MFD-leader Trbovich. The candidates give the impression of unity as they visit the mines to ask for support in the December election.



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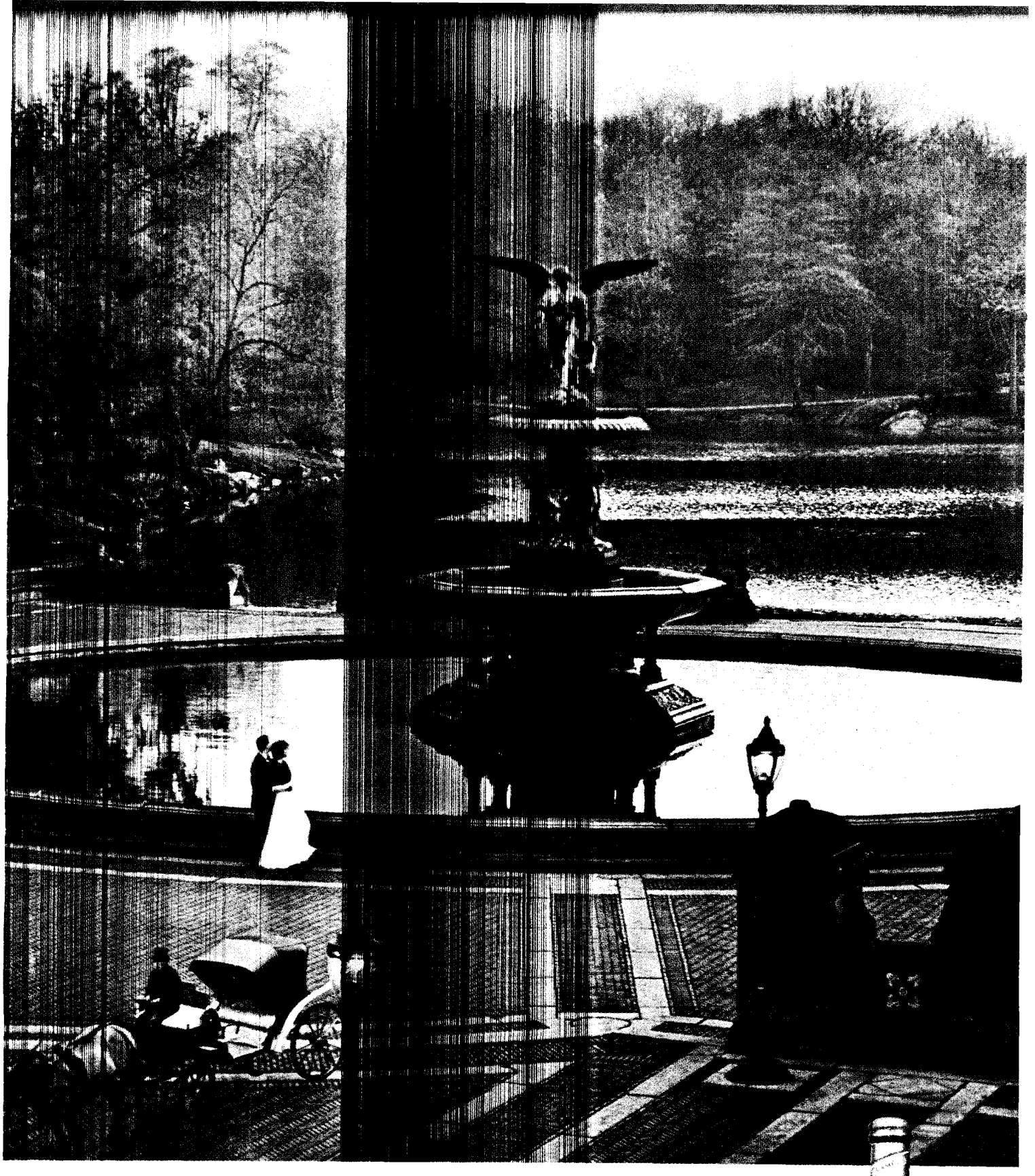

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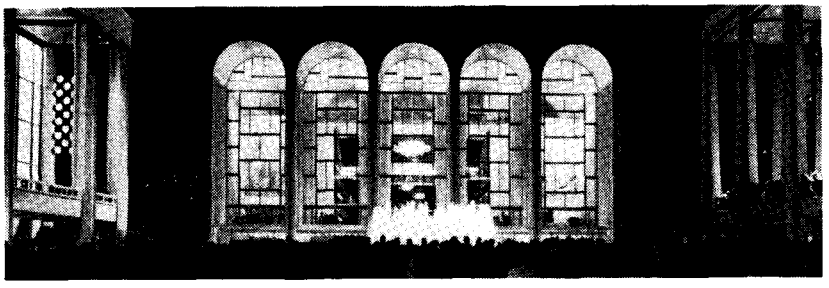

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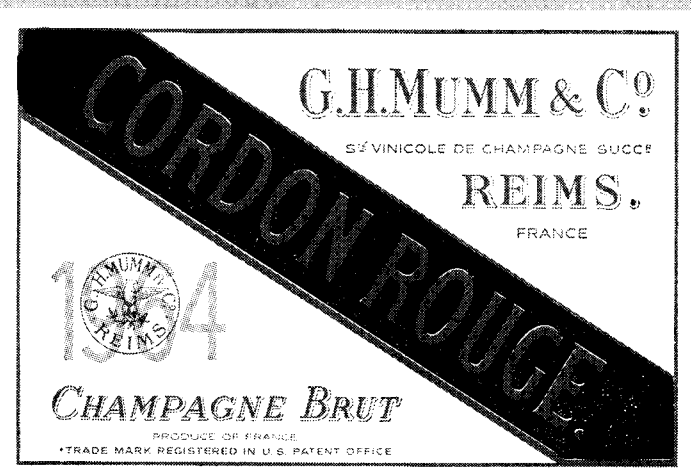


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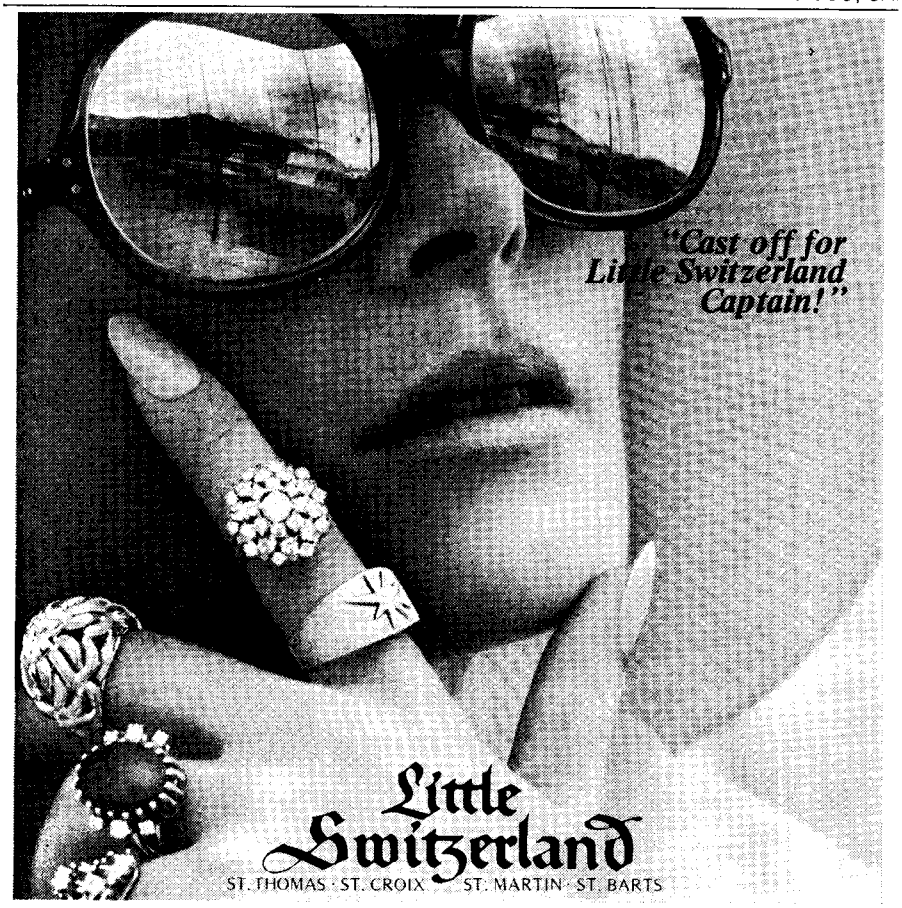


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The best time to find a coal miner is the hour just before his shift. Miners may curse their job, but you can count on them to show up an hour before they are due—to whittle; to tease one another about their lunches, their looks, or their wives (nothing is sacred); to trade horror stories about an accident; to discuss production as if they were foremen; or to talk about their union.

After a fifteen-minute ride the campaign party reaches the Bethlehem A-32 mine. In the bathhouse the miners assigned to the midnight (hootowl) shift are slowly getting into their work clothes.

"Hey, fellers, meet our next president, Arnold Miller," Ed Monborne announces.

The miners glance up at the long-faced, square-cut man in the gray suit. Suits are uncommon in the bathhouse, but the miners seem to sense, from the way Miller shifts his weight from one foot to the other, that he would be more comfortable in overalls. A moustached young miner gives Miller a fisted "power" salute. A couple of older ones stand up and shake his hand. The body language of the others, the way they turn to face the stranger, indicates they welcome him.

"A few of our guys still hide in the corners," John Stasik, a miner standing off to one side, tells me. "But most of them have changed. They weren't sure whether they should go against the bosses in 1969. Now they know."

Some of the miners ask Miller what he plans to do as president.

Miller begins his reply by reminding the men that the UMW was still ignoring black lung decades after European miners' unions had faced up to the problem. He charges that the union ignores safety. He promises to install a union safety watchdog on every shift, with power to pull the men out if conditions are not safe. He talks of cutting salaries and pensions for the top officers (Tony Boyle makes $50,000 a year), of moving the union headquarters from Washington to the coal fields, of setting up sick pay and other fringe benefits in the next contract, of raising pensions. He talks a lot about "honesty" and "democracy"—overused words, but they draw nods in this bathhouse.

"We know what we've got with Boyle," one miner remarks. "We've got to vote for Miller this time."

The miners have been reading the papers. They know that Boyle is appealing a five-year sentence for making illegal political contributions. They know that union officials were penalized for keeping as much as $70 million of pension funds in noninterest bank accounts. They know that three field



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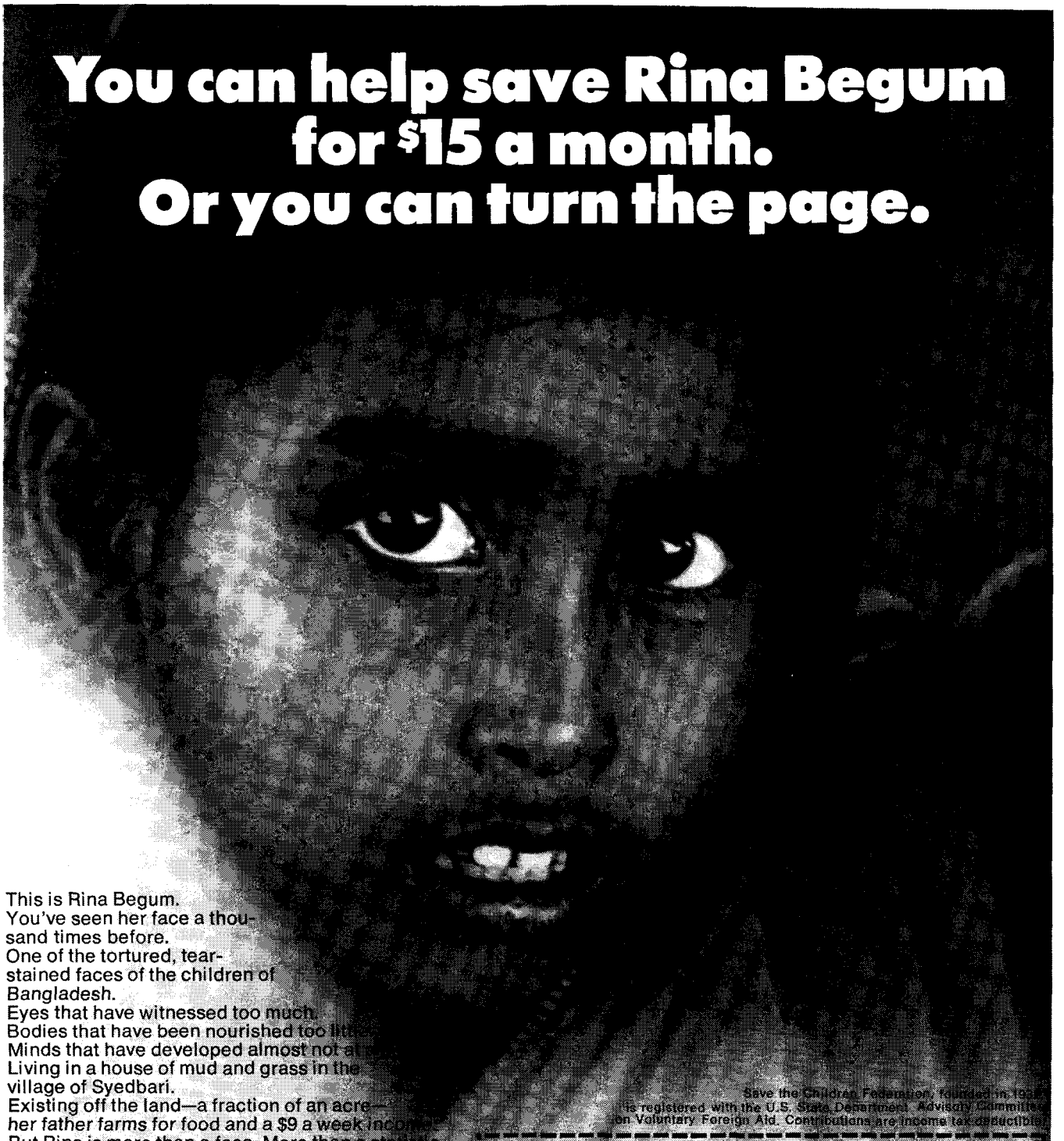

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But Rina is more than a face. More than a statistic.
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$15 that will help Rina to have decent food and clothing and shelter and so much more.
Like the money needed to continue her education.
Like the chance for her father to increase his income.
Like the opportunity for her community to build schools, dig wells, and excavate ponds for fishing and washing.
For the Rina Begums of Bangladesh are what Save the Children is all about. Helping people—indeed, helping an entire community—to help itself.
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officials have been indicted for conspiracy in the Yablonski murder.

Ed Monborne passes out orange "Miller-Trbovich-Patrick" stickers. Most of the miners stick them on their helmets as they troop toward the wide freight elevator that will take them 1,000 feet into the ground.

The elevator disgorges its load of grimy men from the night shift. They are in a rush. Miners are always in a rush after work. But many of them stop when Monborne introduces the stranger in the gray suit.

One of the miners hesitates to hold out his coal-blackened hand.

"That's all right," Arnold Miller says, clasping the hand. "I'm used to dirt. When I was a repairman, my wife used to say I crawled in the stuff."

Miller shakes a lot of hands before the men step under the shower. When all the men have changed clothes and left for their homes, Miller, Trbovich, Patrick, and I drive back to the trailer. "It's like night and day," says Trbovich, remembering Yablonski's lonely times in 1969.

In the morning the candidates head farther east—from bituminous coal country to anthracite. On the long drive Miller sits back and explains his reasons for believing that he—a repairman from Cabin Creek with a ninth-grade education—is capable of running a 180,000-member union.

"First of all, I'm honest and I'm not afraid," he says. "Heck, I know I don't have much education. But I know about coal mining. I know health. I know safety. And I want to turn this union back to the men."

But what about the "outsiders" thing? The UMW keeps insisting that not only are Miller and his buddies outsiders in the sense that they are not part of the national hierarchy but that they are dominated by Joe Rauh, the well-known liberal Washington lawyer, by Yablonski's two lawyer-sons, and by various foundations supposedly serving as fronts for the coal industry. The UMW has charged that government and big business are both using the Miners for Democracy to help break the union.

"That's bullshit," Miller says. "Nobody pushes me around. You ask my wife. I must love her because we've been married for twenty-five years. She doesn't tell me what to do. Nobody does. No lawyer. If we need legal advice, I'll hire a good lawyer. If we need statistics, I'll hire a good economist. We have a lot of talented people on our staff. But I say it's time the miners ran their own union. Not just me. All the miners."

The car rolls into Shenandoah, too nice a name for a wasted valley town.



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The dying anthracite industry has turned Shenandoah into a valley of hell—coal waste piled as high as the houses, mountains gashed by strip-mining, even a hillside shaft mine smoldering with an internal fire.

The candidates stop at the home of Bill Savitsky, an MFD official, who provides sandwiches and coffee. Then we drive downtown to the high school auditorium for a rally. As we climb uphill from the parking lot, we meet a little old man standing at a street corner. He holds out his hand for Miller to shake.

"I hope you don't mind," says Casimir Shuck. "I shook Jock Yablonski's hand right here in 1969. Now I want to shake your hand, too."

"That's very nice of you," Miller says.

Mr. Shuck stands on the corner and talks about his life. He is sixty-six years old. He worked forty-one years in the anthracite mines. Now he receives a pension of $30 a month.

"That's a dollar a day," Mr. Shuck says. "You can't live on a dollar a day. Meanwhile, those goons in Washington are making thousands a month."

Mr. Shuck watches other pensioners filing into the auditorium.

"It wasn't like this in 1969," he says. "We held a rally on Sunday. The bars were closed. But somebody hired the Lits' Hall [a Lithuanian social club] up on the hill. When our rally started, seventy men marched down from the Lits' Hall and broke up our meeting.

"Look at this today—no trouble. We used to have to whisper. Now we talk out loud."

At the rally Mike Trbovich makes a passionate plea for change, Harry Patrick predicts that Tony Boyle will be implicated in the Yablonski murders "before the election in December," and Arnold Miller once again promises to bring "democracy" to the UMW.

Back in the car the three candidates are enthusiastic. Like Casimir Shuck, they have noticed a difference between 1969 and 1972. On the other hand, they have not forgotten what happened to Jock Yablonski.

"Sure, I think about it," Miller says. "When I was nominated, my wife didn't want me to run. Sure, I know what could happen. But we're prepared. We have our friends. Some places we'll need more security than others. It'll get tighter as the campaign wears on.

"Hell, I don't want to die. But I'm forty-nine years old. I've had my career. I'm thinking of the young miners coming up. I want to make mining safe for them. I think that my running for office is the best way to do it." □


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# Editorial

## The Central Event of the Last Decade

About a year ago President Nixon's plenipotentiary for peace, Henry A. Kissinger, surprised a group of Washington reporters by dismissing the war in Vietnam as a minor nuisance. "What we are doing now with China," he said exuberantly, "is so great, so historic, that the word 'Vietnam' will be only a footnote when it is written in history." He was, of course, getting carried away. Momentous as was President Nixon's visit to Communist China, it was reck-

David Halberstam

Edwin O. Reischauer

less of Dr. Kissinger to brush aside as unimportant the longest and most disruptive war in the history of the United States. Indeed, it is ironic to note today that nothing in Dr. Kissinger's long career could do more to assure him a place in history than the so-called Kissinger Compromise, which appears to be the basis for bringing this seemingly interminable "footnote" to a conclusion.

For the fact is that the Vietnam War, far from being an addendum, has been the central event of the last decade. When one looks back over the eleven years in which Americans have been involved in Vietnam, it is possible to say that this war has changed the con-

Leslie Fiedler

Francine Gray

Seymour M. Hersh

Robert Jay Lifton

Gloria Emerson

sciousness of a generation fully as much as did the Second World War a quarter of a century ago. Moreover, the war in Vietnam has profoundly altered our society. Virtually none of our institutions, from the universities to the army to the office of the presidency, has been left untouched by it.

And now, at long last, it seems that we are turning the corner to peace. Accordingly, thoughtful Americans are beginning to look back over these years of fighting so as to add up the costs and ponder the effects. With the aim of contributing to this process, we have devoted almost all of the present issue of *SR/The Society* to an assessment of

Theo Sommer

Lord George-Brown

the consequences of the war in Vietnam. We have asked a group of twelve distinguished commentators, pictured here, to tell us, each in his or her own field of specialty, how the war has affected our world and what it means for the future.

All of these authors share the conviction that the war has become a major force for change in our times. Beyond that, however, they differ widely. For example, Robert Lekachman states that many of the forward-looking social programs of the Great Society failed because, when placed in competition with the war effort, they became "fiscally stunted" and were "deprived of adequate congressional and public attention." Nathan Glazer takes an opposite view, arguing that at least the more spectacular of these failures collapsed of their own accord and that "both Presidents Johnson and Nixon clearly were unwilling to cut into most social programs, or severely inhibit their growth, in order to pay for the war." Leslie Fiedler sees our involvement in Vietnam as a moral outrage, the more so because we allowed the war to be prosecuted by "our servants." On the other hand, Edwin Reischauer believes

Robert Lekachman

Nathan Glazer

that, terrible as it has been, the war has had a beneficially instructive effect on Americans, painfully driving home the point that "the less developed countries . . . are really independent of whatever global balance of power may exist." Francine Gray says the war has heightened our defensive "self-idolatry" —a fact that may have dire consequences in the future; whereas Lord George-Brown and Herman Kahn de-

Herman Kahn

fend the war as having been in our best interests.

Such divergence of opinion seems inevitable, since the final judgment of history is yet to be rendered; these essays are but the first trial balance of a bill that Americans must, and should, be reckoning for many years to come.

William H. Honan



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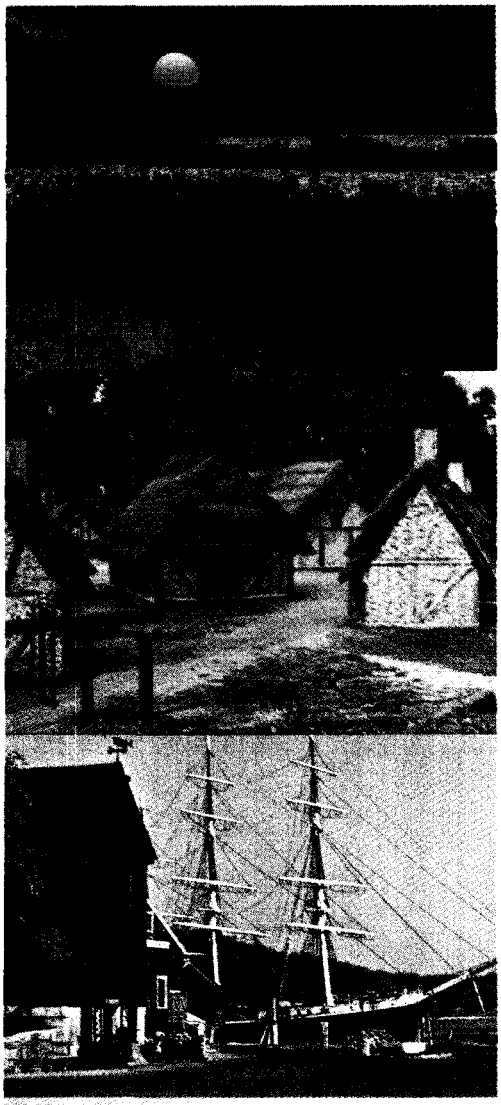

It's hard to believe, but it's a fact. After supplying so much of the material and the land to build America's houses and cities and highways, after meeting our constantly growing demands for paper products, our forest is still 761 million acres big.

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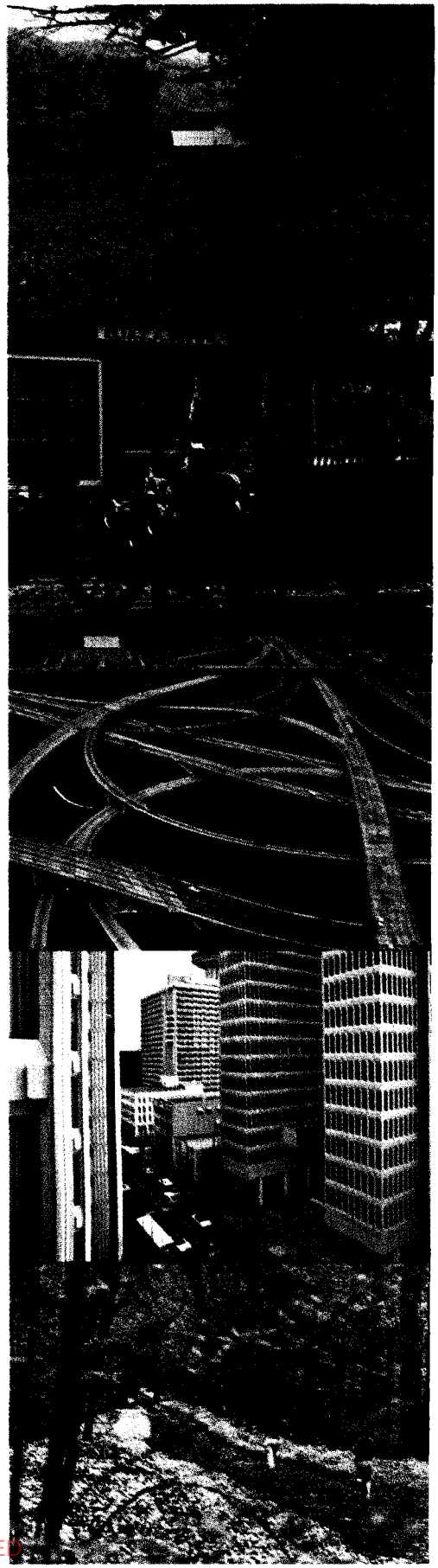
**American Forest Institute** 4



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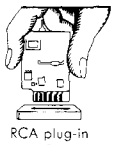
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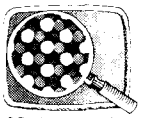
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Here are the basic provisions: If anything goes wrong with your new XL-100 within a year from the day you buy it—and it's our fault—we'll pay to have it fixed. This includes regular labor charges plus parts (new or, at our option, rebuilt). Use any service shop in which you have confidence—no need to pick from an authorized list. If your set has a 19" diagonal screen, you take it in for service. For larger sets, a serviceman will come to your home. Present the warranty registration your dealer provided when you bought your set, and RCA will pay the repair bill. If the picture tube becomes defective during the first two years, we will exchange it for a rebuilt tube. (We pay for installation during the first year—you pay for it in the second year.) RCA's "Purchaser Satisfaction" warranty covers every set defect. It doesn't cover installation, foreign use, antenna systems or adjustment of customer controls.

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# Letters

**Spoilsports for '76**

Milton Viorst's "Bumpy Course for the Denver Olympics" [*SR*, Oct. 21] is beset with bias, fraught with factual error, and filled with fiction. Since Mr. Viorst writes from nearly two thousand miles away, perhaps he should be forgiven, but Rep. Richard Lamm, assistant minority leader in the Colorado House of Representatives, must be corrected.

You quote him as saying: ". . . But a state that has never taken down as much as a single billboard . . . is not going to run an Olympics that the ecologists would like."

In the state of Colorado, as of October 4, 1972, 13,707 billboards have been removed out of a gross count of 26,644. Since Representative Lamm is well informed, he cannot plead ignorance of these facts.

Carl H. Gustafson
Majority Leader
*House of Representatives*
State of Colorado
Denver, Colo.

Ever since the campaign by Citizens for Colorado's Future became known nationally, I have been interrogated by amazed and bewildered out-of-state friends why the people of this state would *not* want to host the Olympics in 1976. "After all," they exclaim, "it is *such* an honor!" At the same time we are bombarded by statements from our state leaders that the citizens of Colorado will "lose face" if we reject a project we never wanted.

There seems to be a growing awareness of the deterioration of our fragile high-country environment and the precarious position of our cities and towns as well as the encroachment by recreational overuse and unwise development on our mountain country.

As the article makes clear, there is more to this issue than the "honor" of hosting the Games.

Kevin L. Markey
Boulder, Colo.

**Dreadful Tidings**

"The Doomsday Syndrome" by John Maddox [*SR*, Oct. 21] is possibly the most specious article I have ever read.

Among the many inconsistencies to be found in this gold mine of nineteenth-century know-nothingism is the absurd discussion of the immense size of the physical environment and its relationship to the dispersal of pollutants. "Moreover, the scale [of pollution] is still puny in relation to the size of the earth's envelope . . ." is a statement that ignores Maddox's own example of strontium 90 and the speed with which it came to rest in human bodies.

Dr. Maddox states that the special nature of science lies in its ability to understand complicated problems by breaking them into their constituent parts. As a method of discovery and analysis, this definition is suitable. But is not science the consequent synthesis of these parts with a view toward understanding nature? It seems that as misunderstanding an essay as "The Doomsday Syndrome" could have been written only by an author with such a narrow definition of the structure and function of science, for only then could he overlook so much.

John C. Ljubenkov
Biologist
Cabrillo Beach Marine Museum
San Pedro, Calif.

**The Welfare Mess**

Jack Star's article "Don Coran's Disaster Area" [*SR*, Oct. 21] was of particular interest to me, for I have a vested interest in social work and public welfare. The notion that "graduate schools of social work don't prepare their students for the public agencies" and "channel them into private agencies" is not really true. They are prepared educationally to work in either. There are a number of people with degrees at the baccalaureate and master's level who would be quite happy to work in a public-welfare agency if jobs were available. Check and see how many job openings there are and how many applicants there are for each job. It is not a lack of qualified applicants for social-work positions that creates case loads of 366 families; it is unwillingness to pay for additional social workers.

Russell E. Smith
Professor
California State University
Sacramento, Calif.

**Capping the Argument?**

Somehow Al Capp's discoursing on the tax system in "Do Our Tax Laws Need a Shake-up?" [*SR*, Oct. 21] is like Bette Davis's pushing orange juice or Danny Thomas's pushing "his" coffee; only they have taste.

Kippy Kaffenberger
Cambridge, Mass.



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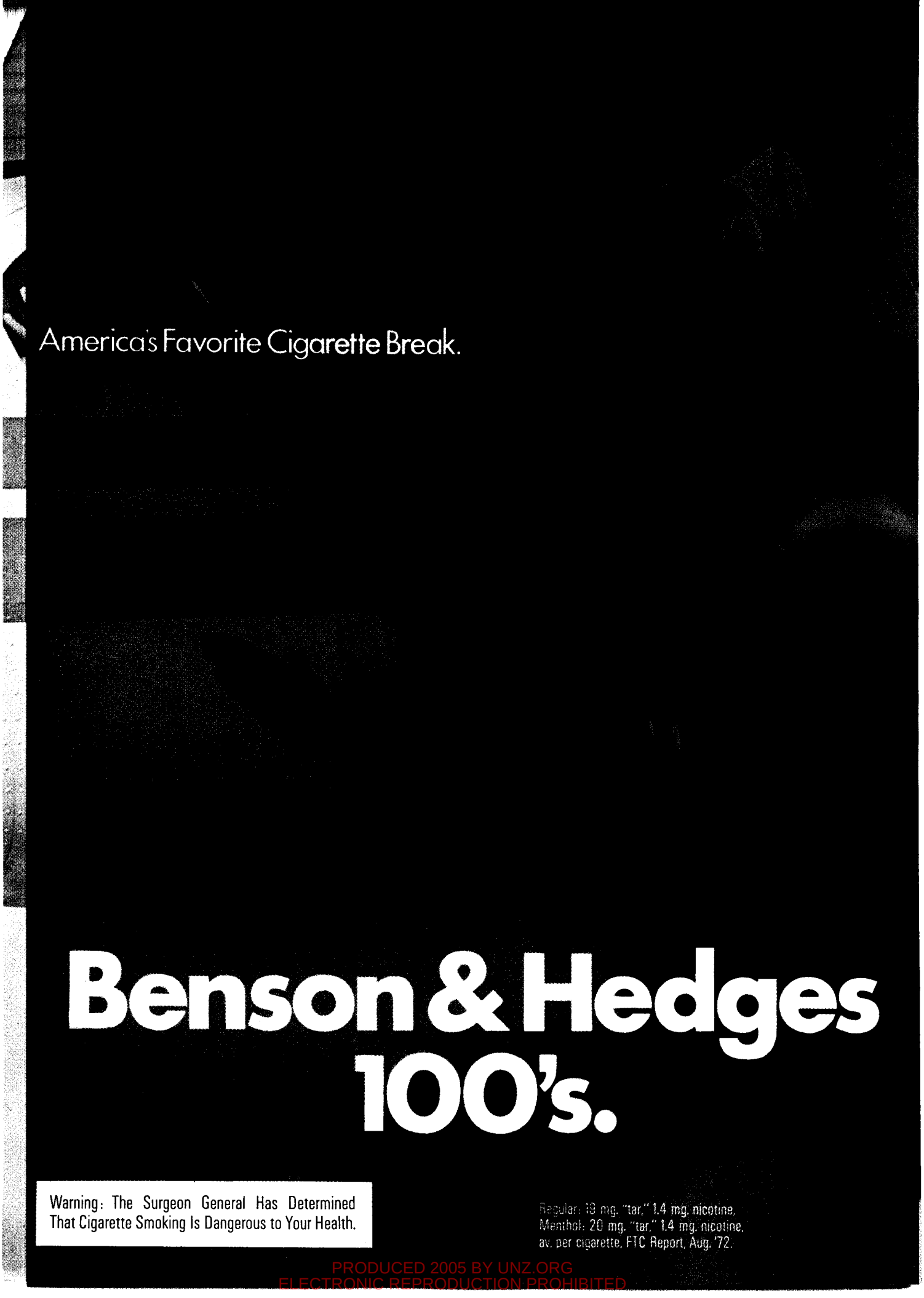
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av. per cigarette, FTC Report, Aug. '72.

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*Saturday Review of*
THE SOCIETY

# THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR

United States Army Specialist Fourth Class James Thomas Davis, twenty-five years old, had never heard of Vietnam when he received orders to go there in 1961. In December of that year he was killed in a Vietcong ambush twenty-five miles from Saigon, becoming the first American combat fatality of the war. Except for a headline in his home-town newspaper, the *Livingston* (Tennessee) *Enterprise*, his death went unnoticed in the United States.

Five years later Davis came to national attention when President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaimed him "the first American killed in the resistance to aggression in Vietnam."

Today Davis's death takes on added symbolic importance. For, with peace seemingly close at hand, thoughtful Americans are beginning to look back over the years of fighting to add up the cost and ponder the consequences of the longest and in some ways most disruptive war in the nation's history. Davis's death was but the first of many sacrifices, the first of many consequences of a war whose repercussions will be felt for years to come.

*An Informed People Means A Good Government*

LIVINGSTON ENTERPRISE, Friday, Janu

**Davis Killed In Viet Nam Duty**

James Thomas Davis, 25 year old son of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Davis, gave his life in the service of his country on December 22, 1961. Davis, who was attached to the Military Assistance Advisory Group in Viet Nam, was killed instantly while actively performing his training mission.

In a report received here, young Davis was riding with a Viet Nam soldier in the cab of a truck which was transporting nine other Viet Nam soldiers when an electrically controlled land mine was set off directly under the truck bed. All nine of the men in the truck bed were killed instantly by the blast. Davis survived the mine blast to be killed moments later by a bullet fired from am-

First Methodist and Rev. Clarence Stewart, pastor of First Baptist Church, officiated. Military rites were conducted at Good Hope Cemetery.

Davis was born in Livingston on June 1, 1936. He received his education in the Livingston schools where he was popular with both teachers and students. He graduated from Livingston Academy in 1954. He entered the Army in 1959, a week after he completed his studies at T. P. I. in Cookeville.

He was married to the former Miss Geraldine Martin of Livingston, and was the father of a daughter, Cindy.

Other survivors are three brothers, Bill, Joe and Jack Davis; a sister Janie Mar-

With the aim of contributing to this assessment, we have asked a group of twelve distinguished correspondents, social thinkers, and commentators to tell us, each in his or her special field, precisely how the war has affected America and what that means for our future. Their answers occupy the following fifty-six pages.

**1961 | 1962**



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The Political Consequences

# THE VAST BACKFIRE OF ACTIVISM

*By David Halberstam*

The principal effect of the war, the author says, is "a growing skepticism about politicians in general and the political act as a creative force in life." In a sense, we have all become "Europeans."

Do you remember the high point, not so many years ago, in the latter part of the twentieth century it was, when he was at the peak of his power and his touch was still magic? Historians claim that the apex came at Atlantic City, where he sponsored his own rites of coronation; he orchestrated everything, his picture was everywhere, the band played "Hello, Lyndon" ("We have faith in thee, Lyndon," went the words), a popular hit that year among the Democrats (since the author had refused the Republicans' request for their own adaptation, there would be no "Hello, Barry"). A golden age seemed in the offing, a Great Society beckoned, we dreamed his dreams and he ours, the sick to be healed, the old to be comforted, the poor to become bourgeois. Why, even the Negroes in the crowds, he himself admitted, reached out for him like he was Jesus Christ. So the coronation was held without a sour note, though, of course, there were those people from Mississippi, young and black, and none of them very kempt, and while their grievances were certainly justified, was this the time and place to cause trouble, to call attention to the discrepancies between the rhetoric of Johnson and the reality of Eastland? To spoil such an otherwise flawless party? Clearly not, and we sighed a collective sigh of relief when Hubert Humphrey was assigned to pacify—using that word in the now obsolete sense—the party spoilers. We still liked Hubert then; he had—there is no better word—credibility with the liberals.

Then do you recall, somewhat later in that same century, the Democratic Convention of 1968? Held in Chicago, if memory serves correctly. He was still President then, though he was said to have a credibility problem, and certainly he changed press secretaries rather regularly (his most faithful one, George Reedy, was then in the process of writing a book entitled *Twilight of the Presidency*). Even so, he was not able to attend the convention that year, although the date for it, curiously enough, coincided with his birthday and a second coronation had been a definite possibility. Yet photographs of him still abounded; he was not yet a nonperson. The convention, you will recall, was a shade noisier and more discordant this time; the Mississippians had been joined by many of the very same people who had helped Hubert pacify them in 1964 and who had depacified themselves in the interim. By now he was an embattled President, and nobody reached out for him like he was Jesus Christ any more. Not everyone had turned against him, however. In Saigon his man Bob Komer was still telling him that pacification was going just fine and had promised that the war would not be an election issue; in Washington the President's closest national security adviser, Walt Rostow, was even more optimistic about the course of the war and did not see it affecting American politics either. Indeed, in December of 1968, as he was packing his bags to leave for a university job (not at MIT but at Texas, it would turn out), Rostow was still able to tell visitors that the war had not been an issue in the campaign.

Our third scene is still in this same century, this time in Miami in 1972 (security was considered good in Miami, and security by then had become a prime factor in selecting convention sites—the ability to seal off a nominee from many of his fellow citizens was of growing importance). The Democrats, now clearly also a minority party in American life, were talking at great length about boycotting lettuce and ending the war; the unwashed had washed and taken over. John Connally had fled back to Texas, where they still knew how to treat a gentleman, and that portly figure standing outside the hall without a ticket was, yes, Richard Daley. But Daley's humiliation, though painfully public, was smaller than the one accorded Lyndon Johnson, who was nearly erased from his party's memory. There were no ringing speeches recalling his good deeds, his many acts for mankind and Democrats alike. In the great hall itself, where

**American advisors in Vietnam "are not combat troops in the generally understood sense of the word."**

**—J.F.K.**

*David Halberstam, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1964 for his reporting from Vietnam, is the author of a recently published study of the escalation of the war entitled* The Best and the Brightest.



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the Democrats unveiled huge photographs of their past heroes. Presidents and presidential candidates, one saw Roosevelt and Truman, Stevenson and both Kennedys. But no Lyndon. If you wanted to see what Lyndon looked like, a remembrance of things past, well, he was there all right, in a side room among smaller photographs of men who had been the leading Democratic *congressional* figures of those years. Clearly, then, there had been no President Lyndon Johnson; John F. Kennedy had been assassinated, after an inordinately long wait a special election had been held, Richard Nixon elected, and Richard Nixon had begun a war. And just to emphasize how far the mighty had fallen and the lowly had risen, a few weeks later in that same convention hall the Republicans nominated Richard Nixon, this time in a coronation ceremony of their own, the same Richard Nixon who in 1966 had dared criticize Johnson's war policies, provoking the President to refer to him the next day before reporters as "the lawyer for Pepsi-Cola."

And all because he sent American boys over there to do what Asian boys should have done for themselves. What irony, what tragedy, to be brought from a point so high to a point so low, a life's goals and ambitions wiped out by one decision. Particularly for a man who had so little taste for the military, so little desire to be around generals and admirals or to be a wartime President, who never wanted this particular little war, who had a sense of foreboding about what it might do to his domestic dreams but could not pull back from what he saw as the forces of history. (To George Ball, pleading for negotiations, he could say, "Pull me a rabbit out of the hat, George," which translated as, "Make it go away if you can.") And to top it all, he was brought low by a war against what he regularly described as a "raggedy-ass little fourth-rate power." (His awe of the other side was never very great; in 1964, annoyed by the lack of intelligence he was getting from Hanoi, he suggested that CIA chief John McCone hire some Chinese coolies from a San Francisco laundry shop, airlift them over, and have them send out their messages in bottles.)

Who would have thought that all those brilliant men around him would also become casualties of war, that this dashing, confident team of elite managers would have their careers irreparably damaged, their future political activities forced almost underground (McGeorge Bundy quietly circulating memos on the war to Humphrey in 1968, knowing that by then no candidate could afford to be publicly associated with his name)? More importantly, who would have guessed in the giddy days of Camelot that what these men symbolized in terms of American centrist liberalism would be severely damaged and that the whole shape of American politics would be changed because of the war? For at the time they seemed the most luminary group of men assembled in government in this century—good, liberal, intelligent, humane men, yet tough-minded—and the promise of what they could do for America, like them a country at once strong and humane, seemed very great indeed. There was much to be accomplished to get America moving again after the phlegmatic indifference of the Eisenhower years. Now, finally, the Communists abroad and the racists at home had met their match. No wonder they mesmerized not only us but their future boss as well, who was awed by their talent and their brains on first meeting them. Johnson had come back from his first cabinet meeting as Vice-President and sought out Sam Rayburn, his old mentor, and he had rhapsodized about them, McNamara from the Ford Motor Co., Rusk from the Rockefeller Foundation, Bundy from Harvard; they were all so quick and brilliant. And Rayburn had listened for some time and had finally said, "Well, Lyndon, everything you say may be right, and they may be every bit as able as you say—but I'd feel a whole lot better if just one of them had run for sheriff once."

Amidst the ashes of all those dreams it is interesting to note that at almost the same time there had been a surprisingly similar warning from someone who could not have been more dissimilar in background and attitude to crusty old Sam Rayburn. This was David Riesman, the Harvard sociologist. Riesman had visited Washington in the early days of the Kennedy administration, and he had lunched with two of his old friends from academe, now key members of the new government. He found them primed with the aggressive liberalism of the

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period, filled with enthusiasm and excitement over the possibilities for waging guerrilla wars throughout the world. Riesman had listened with mounting apprehension, and he had finally asked his two hosts whether they had ever been to Utah. Utah? they had asked. No, why Utah? Had Riesman been to Utah? He had not, Riesman answered, but he had studied a good deal about the Church of the Latter Day Saints, and he knew about the deep-seated jingoism and evangelical fervor that lay just beneath the surface of this country. He was aware that the fabric of this society had always been very thin and that it was stretched across a very disparate nation. He mentioned this to them, mentioned that the effect of a war upon America was hard to predict but that it was not likely to be beneficial, and they condescendingly pushed aside his doubts, saying that they knew what they were doing, this was a different era —and, besides, it was a very small war. He left, deeply uneasy about the direction of the administration, thinking that he had just lunched with Atlantic provincials—brilliant men, but provincials nonetheless—and feeling that they had no sense at all of the possible impact of their foreign policy deeds upon the thin and delicate fabric of American domestic society.

That proved to be true, of course; they did not. As Sam Rayburn instinctively knew, they were not men who had been produced by the American political process. They were brilliant men who had excelled in elitist areas and who had been grafted on at the top of the process. They took pride in the fact that they were not politicians and that their foreign policy decisions were not tainted by anything as base as political considerations (though, of course, in any real sense domestic considerations were always there—they hesitated to talk about realigning our mindless China policy for fear of the Right). They were not linked to the political process, and so they were not sensitive to the damage they might do. The remarkable political naïveté of the period was well illustrated by McGeorge Bundy. In 1965 Bundy argued for bombing the North, not because it would work, but because thereupon the President could say to his critics, as he disengaged, that he had tried everything possible. It was clear even then that the reverse was true, the bombing did not represent trying everything possible, and that, once having bombed, the United States was committed even more to attempting to save South Vietnam. The failure of the bombing meant that troops would inevitably follow—the ante could only go up.

As matters turned out, the American political fabric was stretched even thinner than anyone, including Riesman, knew. The essential fiber of American politics and, in particular, of the governing Democratic party had long been rubbed threadbare; the society had changed far faster than the capacity of the political process to respond. At the same time the basic governing coalition that had been put together in New Deal days seemed to have less and less relevance to new social problems—in fact, there were increasing numbers of people who felt that the old programs and the government itself were the problem. There had not been a major new domestic program since the New Deal. The Democratic party had been a fragile piece of work at best; it had always meant different things to very different groups of people. The issues that had allowed it to dominate American political life for more than thirty years were less and less viable. The blue-collar white no longer had the same problems as the black; affluence and partnership in the society had come to some groups in the governing coalition but not to others. Urban decay and mounting racial tensions had weakened that most vital Democratic base, the cities. As the cities grew sicker throughout the Sixties, the structure of the party disintegrated further. Gaps became chasms, not just because of the sheer political and moral questions the war raised —though they could not be underestimated—but because of the parallel problems it caused: the rampant inflation that ripped the cities, the diversion of resources from domestic programs to the Pentagon, and the mounting dissent from established authority.

As the Sixties had opened, the old partners in the coalition were none too congenial with each other: Martin Luther King, Dick Daley, Kenneth Galbraith, George Meany, and John Connally were not easy bedfellows. They represented different Americas that were willing, quadrennially at least, to minimize their differences and were held together, increasingly as American life became more fragmented, not so much by common desires as by common enemies. Lyndon Johnson had gone on the ticket in 1960 and helped bind an uneasy South to the national party mainly because Sam Rayburn hated, really *hated*, Richard Nixon; the scars of the Fifties were not easily forgotten. (Given the new tensions in American life, it is easy to visualize Sam Rayburn in 1972 more at ease with Nixon than with McGovern–McCarthy–Ted Kennedy Democrats.) The great glue that held the coalition together in 1964 was not the charm of Lyndon Johnson but the fear of Barry Goldwater.

The war very simply brought out what Riesman had expected; powerful feelings thinly concealed in all kinds of people now surfaced. It cast a new political identity on them. Some thought the war proper and correct; for others it became a symbol of growing doubts about American life. A majority could begin by supporting the war, but a growing, articulate minority would be completely appalled. Patriotism, love of country, love of flag became issues. Some young Americans felt so strongly that they went to Canada to escape military service; more important, in sheer tactical and political terms, a liberal Democratic candidate like George McGovern had

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to confront the issue of draft evasion—morally correct, politically unpopular.

The old coalition came apart with a special bitterness. Old allies felt betrayed by each other. Could Meany's anger at McGovern be matched by comparable feelings toward Richard Nixon—particularly since Nixon, like Meany, favored an essentially static America and felt threatened by the turbulence of a new, emerging America? Wasn't the bitterness of the liberal intellectuals toward Hubert Humphrey in 1968 and then again in 1972 (a bitterness that Humphrey and his supporters reciprocated) vastly more intense than their feelings against Nixon? In the late Sixties could anyone, reading the pages of *Commentary*, a classic liberal magazine, doubt that its editors viewed the real threat to American liberty as coming now from the far Left rather than the Right? To young, peace-oriented college students, potential members of a new Democratic coalition, the enemy in 1968 was not the ruling class of big business (whose children often went to the same colleges and shared the same attitudes) but rather those who upheld the agreed-upon rules of society—the cops and the hardhats. Nor did the feelings of the antiwar protesters go unreciprocated: Who will forget the hardhats marching in favor of the war in 1969 and 1970, carrying signs that said, "God Bless the Establishment"? Although it was the Democrats who escalated the war in 1965, the antiwar fervor by 1968 was centered, not in the nominal opposition party, but in the Democratic party. It was the most bitter and personal kind of fight—a family feud.

So it was hardly surprising that Richard Nixon became the chief beneficiary of the disintegration of the Democratic party. In contrast to the excessive visibility of Lyndon Johnson he was wise enough to maintain a singularly low profile. Whereas Johnson had been everywhere, irritating the conservatives one night by appearing on television to implore the nation to help the poor and then irritating the liberals the next night by demanding that they support the bombing or be branded disloyal Americans, Richard Nixon had learned a simple lesson about American politics. He had learned that most of our problems were not readily reversible, at least not within the four or eight years of his reign, and the less his fellow citizens connected him with the failure and frustration of their daily lives, the better; the less they saw of him, the harder it would be to make the connection. (Crime in the streets as an issue, for example, died the moment Richard Nixon, flanked by John Mitchell, was elected; crime in the streets as a problem for millions of Americans, however, remains very much alive today.)

Nixon knew that he could only continue the war on the sly, without the television cameras and his predecessor's constant boasting. (Johnson had taken the war too emotionally and had passed that emotion on to the public.) Clearly, the best way to wage war was from bombers at thirty-five thousand feet. Bombs that are not seen have not fallen. His administration was deliberately colorless and inaccessible. The single exception was Henry Kissinger, and it was soon discovered that a Washington press corps so desperate for news and access to somebody in authority would be willing to print Kissinger's views and analyses with remarkably little dissent. As for the President himself, he was rarely seen for any length of time except in places like Peking or Moscow, appearances that, if nothing else, helped erase the image of the red-baiting Nixon of the Fifties. Thus the diminution of an old enemy.

But what served Nixon particularly well—even better than his travels—was the fact that he operated in a society still numb from moral exhaustion. He was, in fact, almost ideally constituted for the times; those endless years of running for office, so many campaigns for so many jobs, had removed most of his human juices. He was a man not of the Left or the Right but essentially a neuter man, a man of whichever way the wind was blowing—and what better way to operate in a time when there was still so much bitterness around than by being neuter? He simply did not elicit powerful feelings, either positive or negative. It was hard for many, in the wake of the emotional trauma of the Johnson years, to feel strongly about Richard Nixon, if for no other reason than that there was so little to him. For all his myriad deceits and weaknesses it was impossible to blame the great failures of American life on Nixon—only to be angry about his indifference to them.

Indeed, sometimes it seemed as if Nixon had been invented for the post-Johnson years, a time when America had clearly reached beyond itself, had been carried away by its own myths and arrogance. Nixon was America's mirror image of de Gaulle, an anti-de Gaulle, if you will. For, if de Gaulle, by his presence, his elegance and eloquence, was what France had needed at a moment of singularly low national self-esteem, then Nixon, with his remarkable lack of those qualities, his instinct for the banal, his tarnished past, his obvious limits as a man, was exactly what America needed at a moment when it was in the process of groping for a more limited, humbler definition of itself. The very modesty of his proportions commended him to the era.

That redefinition became the special nemesis of the Democratic party and, in particular, of the liberal intellectuals within it. For the basic tenet of the liberal faith had always been activism, the belief that government was essentially good and could bring positive benefits to mankind, that maintaining the status quo was not sufficient if the state were to fulfill its obligations to the people. The vast backfire of activism in the Sixties destroyed that belief. Democratic intellectuals, once committed to a strong America headed by a strong President, were by the end of the decade talking about the limits of power and the need to strengthen the role of the Congress. There was a new sense of doubt, self-doubt really, about the role of government and its capacity to effect positive change. Recently I had lunch with one of the brilliant young presidential advisers of those years, a man



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now in his late thirties, who had sat at the right hand of two powerful Presidents, and what he said seemed an epitaph for the era: "When I entered government in 1961, I thought that it could do good, that what we could accomplish for people was limitless. Now I feel differently. Now I feel that government is not only not a friend, but that it's probably the enemy."

Which leaves the Democrats a party with a shattered credo, believers whose god has failed. In 1968 the Democratic candidate who most excited the liberal intellectuals was Eugene McCarthy, precisely because he seemed not so much to be running for the presidency as against it (asked what he would do if elected, he satirized Eisenhower and said, "I will go to the Pentagon"). Indeed, it struck me that the vital—and unspoken—issue in the debate between Robert Kennedy and McCarthy during the '68 primaries centered on just this question of activism. McCarthy clearly felt that the Kennedys had raised the aspirations and expectations of the electorate at precisely the moment when they should have been lowered; that they held out the promise of solutions to our problems which no government could produce. Robert Kennedy regarded this position as essentially cynical and negative; we simply had to do better, he felt. McCarthy in essence replied: Yes, we have to do better, but can we? Aren't we finally too flawed to do better?

This very special dilemma still exists for the liberal politician; indeed, it was at the heart of George McGovern's problems in the campaign. How do you rally a party of traditional activists to play an essentially undramatic role? How do you excite people to care more about their government when they expect much less of it?

For the fact is that one of the more subtle by-products of the war is the general depoliticization of the society; the political act for many Americans is simply less important. If the successive election of two singularly able Presidents, surrounded by talented advisers, could bring about a catastrophe like the war in Vietnam, if daily life under someone as essentially mediocre as Richard Nixon is for most Americans no worse than it was in the expansive years of the Kennedy administration, then what was the great significance of the political act?

There is in this country a growing skepticism about politicians in general and the political act as a creative force in life. It is far from being a typically American attitude: Americans, in contrast to Europeans, have usually been idealistic about politics and about the possibility of social change. (Europeans, burned more often in the past by foolish politicians and mindless wars, have long regarded politics with an abiding cynicism.) But if rational men have confounded us, if their decisions have produced irrational results, then man does not, after all, control his own destiny—at least not through the political act. Many Americans feel they can express their beliefs and identities, not so much in traditional political terms, but through life-styles that dissent from the country's norms—by wearing longer hair, by engaging in various forms of mysticism, by taking jobs that have no functional value to society.

Such widespread dissent was closely related to the break-up of the old coalition and hurt the Democrats in an even more fundamental way. For it represented a challenge to the basic pluralist concept of a major political party able to encompass broad and divergent viewpoints. This kind of pragmatism had always been one of the great truths of American politics, a way of binding together such a large and diverse nation. But if the quintessentially political act of compromise could lead to such a deeply immoral war, then purity of viewpoint was more important than breadth of base. A figure like women's rights advocate Gloria Steinem illustrates perfectly this continuing shift to purer, more extreme ideological positions. At the start of the Sixties she was a traditional liberal, able to work for the CIA in its attempt to win international youth groups away from the Communists. In the early years of the decade she was very much at ease with the Kennedys and seemed in no way to dissent from their programs. By the mid-Sixties she had become increasingly involved in more radical politics, championing someone like Cesar Chavez. By the

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end of the decade, however, she was concentrating most of her attention on the women's liberation movement, and her definition of a sexist described many of her former allies. In Miami Beach last July Ms. Steinem supported the nomination of Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm and described George McGovern as the best white male candidate.

In the late Sixties and early Seventies American society was in the process of breaking up into an ever increasing number of smaller groups that entered the political arena to advance their own special concerns—women's rights, homosexuals' rights, students' rights, or whatever. Each of their voices became more strident, more assured, less willing to compromise with centrist values. We had moved a long way from that chilly January morning in 1961 when John Kennedy electrified the nation by asking us to think, not of what we could do for ourselves, but of what we could do for our country. Perhaps the toll the war has taken can be measured by how faintly the echo of that call resounds today. □

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The Effect on the Balance of Power, Part I

# REAPING THE BENEFITS OF DEFEAT

*By Edwin O. Reischauer*

**In strict balance-of-power terms, declares Professor Reischauer, the irony is that losing the war has proved more profitable than winning it; yet certain domestic and foreign reactions to the outcome could be dangerous.**

The supreme irony of the Vietnam War may be that, because of our failure to achieve our goals there, the global balance of power has become more stable and may even have shifted in ways favorable to the United States —at least in the short run. The long-run prospects, however, are more disconcerting.

Let me try to untangle the threads. To begin with, we did not become involved in Vietnam out of a concern with the political and social institutions under which Vietnamese people live, nor certainly out of economic considerations, but rather because we sought to maintain the balance of power in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, which appeared to us to be in danger of becoming unbalanced.

In the early years after World War II we supported the French in Indochina because we feared that French reverses and disappointments there would adversely affect the stability of France and thus upset the fragile balance of forces in Europe. As the Cold War intensified, China came under Communist rule, the Korean War gave a searingly hot reality to Cold War fears, and the nations of Indochina came to loom in American minds as front-line defense posts in the global conflict with Communism. Vietnam was seen as a teetering domino in a line stretching back into unspecified heartlands; it was the weak spot in the dike holding back the rising Communist flood; it was the test case in the deadly international game of chicken; it was the place where we would prove definitively that "wars of aggression do not pay." Our hope in Vietnam was that, by a judicious incremental addition of power from our virtually limitless resources, we would, at the least cost to ourselves, find the point at which the other side would cry "uncle." Thus we would demonstrate that we had the will and the capacity to stop the Communists anywhere on the earth. If we proved this point in Vietnam, we believed we would not be faced with other tests and the balance of power would be restored—or perhaps even tipped in our favor.

The war, of course, has turned out quite differently. If anything has been proved, it is that the United States is extremely unlikely to engage again in this sort of misadventure. Whatever the Nixon Doctrine means in a positive sense, it also gives a very clear negative message: "No more Vietnams." If Vietnam, then, was a test case, the way is far more open today than it was before to similar wars of "aggression" or "national liberation" or whatever the Vietnam War has been. The "other side" can now engage in such activities with the understanding that the United States will be very reluctant to intervene in the same massive way it did in Vietnam. Our allies, insofar as they fear such aggression, can have little confidence that we will come to their rescue. In short, we

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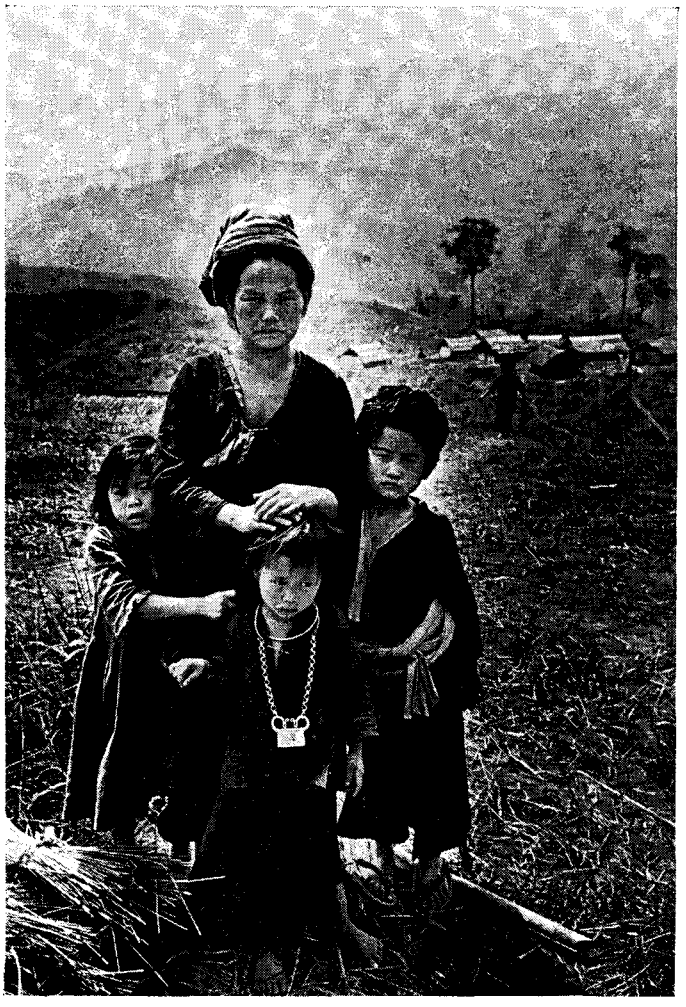
have utterly failed to prove that we can now, or will in the future, stop wars of national liberation, and if our original premise was correct that we must show the power and determination to quell such disturbances as that in Vietnam everywhere in the world, then we must face the fact that the war has produced a catastrophic shift of the balance of power *against* our interests.

I do not believe this to be the case, but anyone convinced of the premise that led us into Vietnam in the first place may now find evidence suggesting dire consequences. North Korea, seeing how deeply mired the United States was in Vietnam, became quite venturesome a few years ago, capturing the electronic intelligence-gathering ship *Pueblo* and sending bands of saboteurs and assassins into South Korea. Kim Il-sung, the Premier of North Korea, obviously felt that the time might be ripe for a military showdown with South Korea. Furthermore, in much of Asia, and perhaps elsewhere, too, there has been a marked downgrading of the American defense shield. The Japanese have even greater doubts than they did before about the credibility of the American nuclear umbrella. The Thais and other Southeast Asians clearly realize that their security cannot be guaranteed by the United States. Talk about a five-sided balance of power in the world (the United States, the Soviet Union, Western Europe, China, and Japan) or a four-sided balance in Asia (all of the aforementioned except Western Europe) —talk that was started largely by President Nixon himself—appears to be an attempt to explain that the United States can no longer single-handedly balance the Soviet Union and China. Some may even see the growing Soviet naval role in East Asian waters, the admission of the People's Republic of China into the United Nations, and the American and Japanese rapprochements with Peking as clear evidences of a massive shift in the balance of power in favor of the Communist side.

But, if the original American premises about what was at stake in the Vietnam War were incorrect, as I believe they were, then all this appears in an entirely different light. And present realities seem to bear me out. For, if a major shift in the balance of power had occurred, one would expect a great increase in influence by and fear of China and the Soviet Union, particularly in East Asia. Yet there is no evidence of such an upsurge of influence or fear.

The Japanese rapprochement with China and Japan's simultaneous efforts to improve economic and other relations with the Soviet Union are basically signs of relaxed fears and growing self-confidence on the part of the Japanese. The tentative contacts established recently between North and South Korea, following the intensification of hostility a couple of years ago, are signs that the North Koreans are giving up hope that either China or the Soviet Union will support them in an aggressive policy and that the South Koreans feel more confidence than before in their own bargaining power. No one can believe that a Vietnam that has remained fiercely independent of China, despite the desperate pressures of war, will become a Chinese puppet in peacetime. Centuries-long domination by the Vietnamese in Indochina makes the ultimate fate of Cambodia and of Laos dependent to a large degree on the outcome in Vietnam, but the concern of these other Asian peoples is with the Vietnamese, not the Chinese. Similarly, Thailand has more to fear from a resurgent Vietnamese neighbor than from the colossus to the north. All of the countries of Southeast Asia are less threatened by external aggression than by internal instabilities—ethnic tensions in Malaysia, economic stagnation in Indonesia, both these problems in Burma, and political and economic instability in the Philippines. All of these nations are susceptible to subversion, but the external pressure in such subversion is inconsequential compared to the internal pressure. Moreover, insofar as the countries of Southeast Asia fear threats from beyond their borders, they are far more worried about Japanese economic domination than about any Chinese or Soviet military power. Even an increased Soviet naval presence seems to raise no fears in Asia. After the American disaster in Vietnam no one can believe that the Soviet Union would choose to embark on military adventures in East Asian waters. Outside of Indochina itself there has been no sign of a domino effect; no flood waters have surged through the broken dike.

Taiwan is one area that has been clearly buffeted by international forces, but the crisis in which it finds itself





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is not one of balance of power in the narrow military sense. Its defenses are secure—at least for the foreseeable future. Taiwan's problem is that the changed diplomatic position of Peking undermines the claim of the government in Taipei to be "China," and that might in the future damage the position of the island in world trade. For the time being, however, Taiwan remains one of the most economically successful units in all of Asia. It seems probable that the diplomatic wave that has swept over it will leave this situation basically unaltered.

In sum, the failure of the United States in Vietnam, whatever it has done to the United States itself, does not appear to have increased the weight of either the Soviet Union or China in the worldwide balance of power. Indeed, there may well be an important gain from the war for the United States in imparting to the American people a more sophisticated understanding of balance-of-power problems. Part of this sophistication may be the realization that there are limitations, after all, to our ability to determine the flow of history, particularly on the soggy economic and institutional terrain of a less developed country, where American power, however "awesome," so easily bogs down. One can hope that we have rid ourselves of at least some of our "arrogance of power."

In addition, we may have learned that the less developed world is not a power vacuum waiting to be filled, if not by us, then by the "other side." Such may have been the situation in the nineteenth century—the golden age for balance-of-power concepts—but it most certainly is not the case today. The rise of nationalism throughout the world has radically altered the relationship between the great military powers and less developed nations. The ability of nationally aroused Chinese guerrillas to frustrate a powerful Japanese military machine in the 1930s and 1940s was the first clear indication of this great change in the strategic situation in the world. The collapse of the colonial empires and the inability of the French and the Dutch to reestablish their power in East Asia was even more emphatic evidence. For those who still could not perceive the trend against successful outside manipulation of less developed powers, the Vietnam War has written the message in still bolder letters.

The war thus has contributed to a growing realization that the less developed countries, far from being sites for the crucial tests of will and strength between the great powers, are really independent of whatever global balance of power may exist. Many of these countries are insistent on their own nonalignment, and all cherish their independence. As a result they cannot be controlled by an external power at a cost that would make the effort a sensible investment. And, even if they could be controlled, they would be of little use to their controllers. Military advantage today does not depend on the domination of pieces of terrain, and, furthermore, weak client states may constitute political and economic liabilities that lessen the strength and increase the vulnerability of the patron country.

The lesson probably has not been fully learned. Too many of the old balance-of-power ideas that led us into Vietnam are still voiced approvingly in Washington and other world capitals today. American, Soviet, and Chinese bluster and posturing over the Indian-Pakistani war last winter demonstrated that these misconceptions survive throughout the world. But the Vietnam War has brought at least a dim awareness that, if the vital interests of the great military powers and the balance of power among them are not much affected by the outcome in Vietnam, their vital interests are not likely to be involved in most other less developed countries. The perceived area of major conflicting interests among the great powers, and therefore the chances for actual conflict among them, has been substantially reduced. In other words, a war fought to maintain the balance of power has through its loss demonstrated that the world was in much greater strategic balance than had been assumed.

Still, granting that the likelihood of big-power confrontation in the less developed world has been reduced, it could be argued that American military ineptitude in Vietnam, or a weakening of the American will in military matters, or merely Soviet or Chinese perceptions of some weakness in the United States has tipped the balance of power against the United States or at least made the balance less stable.

There is little evidence, however, that this has been the effect of the Vietnam War. If there had been some sort of debacle for American forces in Vietnam or a sudden and unceremonious American withdrawal, the balance of power might well have shifted or become destabilized. But the United States has not suffered a Dienbienphu, and meantime other factors appear to have offset possible damage to the credibility of American power. The battlefield experience of U.S. forces in Southeast Asia and the testing of new weapons, such as the "smart bombs," cannot have gone unnoticed by the Chinese and the Russians. Moreover, although American military adventurism has undoubtedly been dealt a blow, there is no reason to believe that the American will to maintain a nuclear balance has been in any way affected. Indeed, the obvious reluctance of both the Soviet Union and China to become directly involved in Vietnam and their

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willingness to reach new agreements with President Nixon while the war was still under way could be seen as showing a weakening of military will on *their* part.

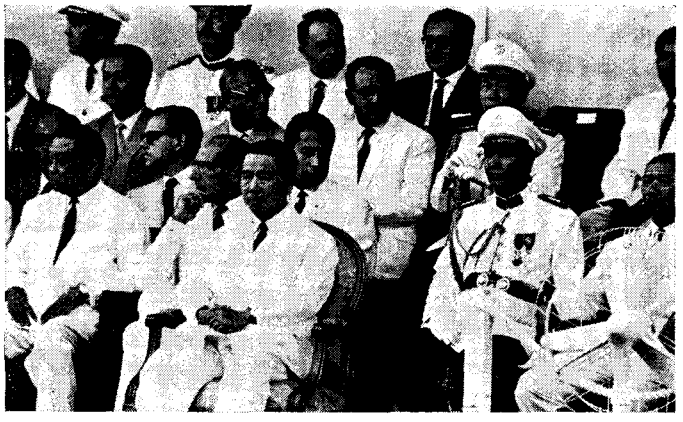
In fact, the Vietnam War not only may have reduced the likelihood of a direct clash of the big powers but may actually have improved the American position. The realization that Chinese aggression and domination were not the problem in Vietnam permitted Americans to see that China was not as militarily aggressive as had been supposed. This realization opened the possibility of relaxation of our containment policy toward China and of the development of more constructive relations with Peking. The decline in Sino-American tensions, in turn, improved the American bargaining position with the Soviet Union, perhaps making more possible the recent strategic arms limitation (SALT) agreements. Some increase in Soviet-Chinese tensions may have resulted from the Washington-Peking thaw, but otherwise the possibilities of direct conflict between the great powers seem to have been reduced, and thus the balance-of-power position of the United States has, if anything, been improved.

The irony, of course, remains that all this was not achieved by design but rather by miscalculation. If the United States had won the Vietnam War in the way it first intended, the balance of power would probably be much less stable than it is today and the strategic position of the United States much less favorable. China would be even more fearful of the United States, and the tensions and dangers of war between China and the United States therefore greater. The Soviet-American relationship might well have worsened rather than improved. Americans, having kept what they believed to be the first domino from falling, would be still burdened with their mistaken worries and false sense of responsibilities around the globe, and the resultant worldwide military involvements would remain as possible reasons for a mutually fatal confrontation with the Soviet Union.

Losing the war, then, has proved, in strict balance-of-power terms, much more beneficial than winning it. And yet there may be serious losses to the United States in the broader field of international relations. For example, there is the danger of a swing back to isolationism in the United States, which is encouraged by natural concern about our manifold domestic problems, some of which have undoubtedly been exacerbated by the war in Vietnam. By isolationism, of course, I do not mean a lessening of our "arrogance of power," the renunciation of our self-chosen role as "world policeman," nor the abandonment of the false balance-of-power concepts that got us into Vietnam. These are all desirable withdrawals toward reality. I am referring to a decline of concern with international problems, particularly the problems of the less developed three-quarters of the world. The growing gap in well-being between this world majority and the minority in the affluent, industrialized nations, together with the global problems of pollution and the pressures of a growing population on limited natural resources, seems to me much more likely to bring the world to disaster than a breakdown in the balance of power. If the Vietnam War induces the American public, which controls so much of the world's wealth, to turn its back on these problems, even temporarily, then this may prove to be the ultimate, though long-fused, disaster resulting from this war.

Even assuming that the American public has not been pushed into an ultimately self-destructive isolationism of this sort, the Vietnam War has worsened the international position of the United States in a number of other ways. Other countries now see us as a nation far less certain of our international course than we appeared before, and therefore they think of us as less predictable. Our assurances of almost any sort, ranging from nuclear protection down to economic aid, seem less credible. At the same time, to many foreign peoples the idea of close association with the United States seems less attractive today than at earlier times. If the American public could react in revulsion to our bombing policies in Vietnam, imagine how much greater has been the revulsion elsewhere. The net result of this offense to world public opinion has been a considerable decline in American prestige and influence. It could be argued that some of this decline is desirable because the American role and influence in the world since World War II have been overreaching. But the decline has certainly gone beyond the desirable point. The United States remains by far the richest and strongest nation in the world, and serious doubts about our intentions and distaste for association with us can have a dangerously destabilizing impact on international relations.

In summary, therefore, I come to three somewhat conflicting conclusions about the effect of the Vietnam War on the balance of power and international relations in



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general. The only thing that all three have in common is that they are at complete variance with the American assumptions that led us into the war. These three conclusions are: 1) The immediate balance of power has been virtually unaffected by the war; 2) the future balance of power has probably been strengthened; and 3) a possible decline of American concern with the more basic world problems and an undoubted lessening in some countries of the desire for close cooperation with the United States may be dangerous long-range effects of the war. Such consequences may, indeed, seriously threaten the prospects for the development of a viable world community over the decades ahead. But we shall have to reserve judgment for the present. □

The Effect on the Balance of Power, Part II

# AN EROSION OF MUTUAL TRUST

*By Theo Sommer*

"Europeans fear that the 'Vietnamization of Vietnam' might be followed by the 'Europeanization of Europe,' " writes the political editor of Die Zeit.

In 1972 there are not many Europeans left who still care to remember that ten, even seven, years ago they supported America's war effort in Vietnam. It is not the fashion nowadays to remember. But there was undeniably a great deal of support, and I was one of the supporters. Late in 1965 I published an article on Lyndon Johnson's intervention in Indochina, embarrassingly entitled "The Necessary War." The argument was deceptively simple: successful aggression begets more aggression, so no aggressor must go unchecked. In the Forties and Fifties the containment of Russian Communism in Europe had been the main task. In the Sixties and Seventies priority would have to be accorded to containing Chinese Communism in Asia. If the Americans did not stand up for Saigon, they could not very well be expected to stand up for Berlin.

All this was conventional wisdom at the time. Like a lot of conventional wisdom, it turned out to be quite wrong—for the simple reason that it rested on a number of fallacious assumptions. *Fallacy number one* relates to the nature of the conflict. Vietnam was not a war instigated from outside, fanned by Moscow or Peking; it was not the beginning of a major Chinese thrust southward by armed revolution. It was originally a civil war fostered by a regime in Hanoi that happened to be both nationalist and Communist and could, by dint of the latter, count on a minimum of aid from Russia and China.

*Fallacy number two* derives from this. It seemed logical to transfer the imperative of containment from the Old World to Southeast Asia. But Indochina was not Western Europe. American efforts alone never had a chance of succeeding in fortifying and holding the line—basically because there was no commensurate effort on the part of the Vietnamese. It was a hopeless task to promote democratic reform while prosecuting a war and even more hopeless to promote the retarded process of Vietnamese nation building by waging an all-out military campaign.

*Fallacy number three* has to do with the strategic philosophy underlying the U.S. operation. Escalation was wrong for two reasons. First, piecemeal deployment of American troops never offered any prospect for decisive success on the battlefield because every increment of U.S. war-fighting capability could be countered by an

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increase in the enemy's fighting strength. Second, as George Ball wisely observed early on, once the United States had actively committed itself to direct conflict with Hanoi, it could not be certain of controlling the scope and extent of escalation. By the same token, the brazen idea that a country such as Vietnam could be reduced from the air was all wrong from the very outset. Anyone who had experienced aerial bombardment during the Second World War or had read the U.S. bombing surveys on Germany and Japan knew that it was not only vile but bound to be ineffective, even counterproductive.

*Fallacy number four* is intimately connected with number three. Long before Lyndon Johnson ordered the suspension of air attacks against North Vietnam, it was glaringly apparent that the instruments of war were no longer proportionate to the aims of war. Anyone who ever visited Vietnam—as I did twice during the Sixties—must have wondered whether laying the country waste in a process of step-by-step vandalization could ever add up to peace, or even pacification. The war, the longer it ran on, blighted all the honorable motives that had ever been adduced or produced in its justification.

The Vietnamese gamble was a moral one so long as a successful outcome appeared to be a reasonable likelihood. It became immoral, a kind of reckless shooting craps with destiny, when nagging doubts first hardened into the certainty that in the end there could be only different degrees of failure and no such thing as success in any meaningful sense of the term.

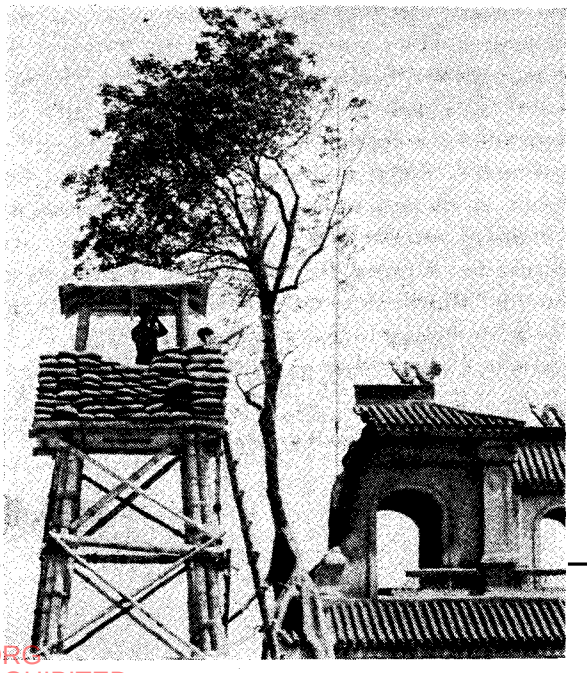
I did not see all this back in 1965; but I did in 1968. By then it was clear that America had climbed on a tiger's back and that dismounting would prove to be a highly painful exercise. The curious thing is that the Vietnam War had outlived itself long before its formal conclusion became visible. The Cold War backdrop of confrontation, against which Dean Rusk had originally projected the conflict, suddenly dissolved when Richard Nixon ushered in his era of negotiations with Moscow and Peking. What earlier had looked like an entr'acte of global contention abruptly shrank into regional insignificance—another Biafra rather than a second Korea. Anyone killed in action between Cape Camau and Vinh Linh after Henry Kissinger's first trip to Peking died for better terms of surrender, not for victory.

Where has the war led the world? Astonishingly enough, the community of nations finds itself in pretty much the same spot it was in before the conflict started. There is a kind of competitive détente among all the principal actors on the world stage, with some limping behind, others nosily and noisily pushing forward.

The Vietnam War has prevented nothing, but it did delay some major international developments by seven or eight years—especially the formation of the new triangular (or perhaps, if one includes Japan and Western Europe, pentagonal) pattern of present-day world politics. It coincided in France with the heyday of Gaullist obstruction to the speedy integration of Europe and in Russia with the obsessive fear of ideological subversion that in 1968 led to military intervention in Czechoslovakia. In fact, the war may have contributed to some of these phenomena. At any rate, it compounded all of them.

But the world community suffered another loss, and this is perhaps the most momentous outcome of the Vietnam War: America has become unsure of her own purpose. Thus her allies have become doubtful of America's dedication to what used to be known as the "common cause." There is no denying the fact that the same allies who were originally impressed by America's steadfast commitment to Vietnam soon started losing confidence in America's judgment. And the result was an erosion of mutual trust within the Atlantic Alliance.

The war taught the United States that there are no triumphs at bargain prices. Will the Americans now be tempted to eschew any commitment at normal rates? Europeans fear that the "Vietnamization of Vietnam" might be followed by the "Europeanization of Europe." In other words, that Washington may leave them in the lurch. I am not one of those who share this apprehension. America's involvement in Vietnam, I have come to learn, was an uncalled-for tragedy; but I still believe that America's commitment to Europe is a prerequisite to her survival. In my view a great deal of compassion for the Americans is in order. They made a mistake by going into Vietnam, but they did not commit a crime. And, hopefully, America is capable of recovering from and learning from her mistakes. □



**1964**



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The Effect on the Balance of Power, Part III

# A VICTORY FOR ALLIANCE

*By Lord George-Brown*

The mere fact that the Vietnam battle was fought by the United States, writes a former British Foreign Secretary, is in itself a great victory for "the freedom to establish freedom."

As I write this, amid speculation that the war in Vietnam is genuinely moving to a conclusion, certain things impress me. In the first place, America's willingness ever to have taken on this highly unpleasant and, in a narrow, national-interest sense, very unrewarding task. It has always seemed to me to be right and justified for America to do so. I have always been convinced that there were not only sound international reasons but also treaty obligations on the part of the United States and others that justified the "intervention"—as critics are pleased to describe the U.S. action.

As a Britisher, I have always found it exceedingly difficult to understand the violence of the opposition to the war in the United States. It has always seemed quite naïve to me to proclaim the Four Freedoms, to have been so successful in preventing their complete extinction so very recently throughout the world at the cost of World War II, and yet to pretend that they have not been or are not being threatened in the world. Not exclusively, but very noticeably, they are threatened in Southeast Asia.

And if they are to remain unextinguished, one cannot rule out the need for alliances and mutual aid treaties as part of the mechanism to sustain them. This course, once embarked on, must involve the honoring of such treaties, even though they involve unforeseen consequences and a wide scope of involvement. To renege at the point at which costly involvement becomes inescapable means not only to acquiesce in the downfall of the cause originally espoused; much more important, it means to lend comfort and support to those who wish to destroy similar freedoms elsewhere and the societies that —whatever their other failings—provide the opportunity for their survival and ultimate fulfillment.

Therefore, I have always felt, both as a British minister and as a British subject, that the United States was entitled to our support and our understanding, even when it seemed to us that perhaps the aims were becoming clouded and the means highly questionable. But the mere fact that the battle was engaged—and a take-over by the Communist forces prevented—was in itself a great victory for the freedom to establish freedom. If the eventual settlement in Vietnam is not as clear-cut as the aims have always been declared to be, this fundamental point still remains. It will remain even when the Communist leaders and their trusting apologists in our midst busily and stridently tell us that a settlement was available all along if only our forces hadn't done this or that in the course of the struggle.

The end of the struggle is the point at which both the American leaders and the American people must be realistic. There is no virtue in prolonging a war beyond a point where a less than ideal but more than tolerable basis for its ending becomes available. Just as obviously, there would have been total madness in the dreadful betrayal of throwing in the towel before that point was reached. But being realistic means more than recognizing this crucial point when it has arrived. It also involves a very close attention to the form and detail of the settlement. It would be a betrayal to leave too much for future arrangements, even though everyone recognizes how limited the immediate agreements are likely to be. The original aim of the exercise must be recalled. And what is left behind to implement, to monitor, and to ensure the fulfillment of the settlement must be sufficiently realistic to do the job. The inevitable human reaction, namely, to be overcome with relief, happiness, and weariness and seek only to erase the unhappy memories, must be resisted. The cease-fire must not be the end if the aims for which so much blood has been shed are to be realized. It must be the beginning of the attempt to achieve the still justified aims by means other than force—force having provided the opportunity that otherwise was not available.

If, as appears to be the case, this is the established position of the U.S. government and if it is fully appreciated that the justified aims must continue to relate to all of Indochina and not just one territorial part, then and only then will the proper moment for a settlement be present. As great as the benefits accruing from a peaceful conclusion to the war in these circumstances are, so equally great, even disastrous, would be the consequences of what on any other terms would only be a surrender affecting the whole world.

My conclusion, therefore, is that it appears that America will be justified by the end of the struggle as well as by its actions during the war. Whether or not all the means used, on reflection, helped or hindered, were nec-

*Lord George-Brown, a member of the British Parliament from 1945 to 1970, was made a life peer in 1971. He was a deputy leader of the Labour party from 1960 to 1970 and served as British Foreign Secretary from 1966 to 1968.*



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essary or equally justified, will be debated. But such debate does not, in my view, invalidate the conclusion stated above. I believe that, once the old "imperialist powers" were excluded—helped vigorously on their way by America, it's worth a note of ironic recall—America could only have refused such a role as it served in Vietnam by failing the rest of the "free" world. It is, I think, tremendously important that America should face this fact. For the United States continues to have a vital, continuing role to play in world security, stability, and development. It has for long been a potent worry that the scars left by this traumatic experience would be of such magnitude that the American people might leave the scene with their tails down, asking that the world be stopped while they get off. While we devoutly hope that everyone, not merely the West, has learned enough not to create the conditions for such a mess again, we have a long way to go to be sure of that.

Meanwhile, political and military alliances will continue to be required. External, economic, social, and regional development policies must be coordinated and made effective. Organizations with the required competence, authority, and power must somehow be brought into existence. The final lesson of the Vietnam tragedy is just how much more necessary and urgent such tasks are now than they were a decade ago. □

## The Cost in Human Lives

# WHO REALLY DIED IN VIETNAM?

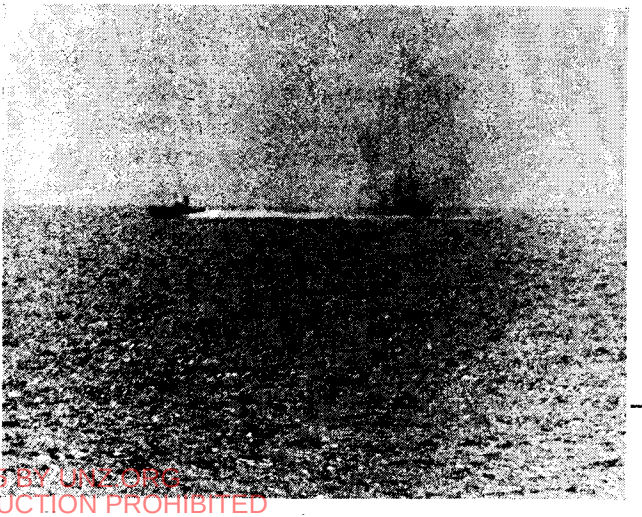
*By Leslie Fiedler*

**"It dawned on me slowly," the author writes, "that I had never known a single family that had lost a son in Vietnam." And the reason, he concludes, is that this has been the first war that "has been fought for us by our servants."**

It is often said that the war in Vietnam has divided our society, pitting generation against generation and class against class; like much that is "often said" about public issues, this is true—but not deeply revealing. It is more revealing, I think, to say that the war in Vietnam has mercilessly brought to light a profound division in our society by demonstrating that the actual fighting of war has become more and more exclusively an occupation of the exploited and dispossessed, while protest against war has been more and more preempted by the privileged and economically secure. As any newspaper reader with a feeling for statistics must have noticed, since about 1962 it has been by and large the obligation of the children of the poor to die in a war they do not understand, while the sons and daughters of the rich are demonstrating at home against that same conflict, which they have come to understand too well to endure.

The place in which the children of the rich have come to their understanding, and then mounted demonstrations, is the university, where their status as students has exempted them from combat. It has been, in fact, the prestige of higher education that has converted universal selective service from a democratic to a discriminatory institution, thus turning the Vietnam War into the first war of which it can be said unequivocally that it is being fought for us by our servants. Yet the university system in the United States is the least elitist of any in the world. Some 25 per cent of our young people between eighteen and twenty-four attend college, and we are presumably on the way to fulfilling the goal of universal higher education implicit in the constitutions of the Land-Grant colleges, which pledge that their doors will remain open to all and that "the tuition shall be forever free."

How did such anomalous inequities arise from the conjuction of two democratic dreams: the dream of sixteen years of schooling for all who desire it and the utopian vision of a citizens' army? From the first there were attempts to subvert the dreams by buying military substitutes, for instance, but not until Vietnam was the privileged evasion of service sanctioned by law. Of course, the exemption of college students would not have made so flagrant a difference had not the population of the universities already been so out of line with the ethnic and class balances of the larger community. Certain groups, such as the Jews, enroll more than 70 per cent of their children in universities, while the blacks have reached only half of the national average and the Indians half that of the blacks.



*Leslie Fiedler teaches English at the State University of New York, Buffalo. His most recent book is* The Stranger in Shakespeare.



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The reasons for such imbalance are complex, but the facts are simple and clear. In our armed forces, drawn from the less favored segments of the community, barely 5 per cent of all enlisted men have made it through college—which is to say that those most likely to die in Vietnam are Americans who were first of all educationally deprived. It would surely be worse, as Sen. Edward Kennedy has argued on the floor of the Senate, if we were to substitute a volunteer army for our present mixture of conscripts and volunteers. But matters are bad enough as they stand—too bad, in fact, either to ignore or to seem to justify by a comparison with what would be even more monstrously unjust.

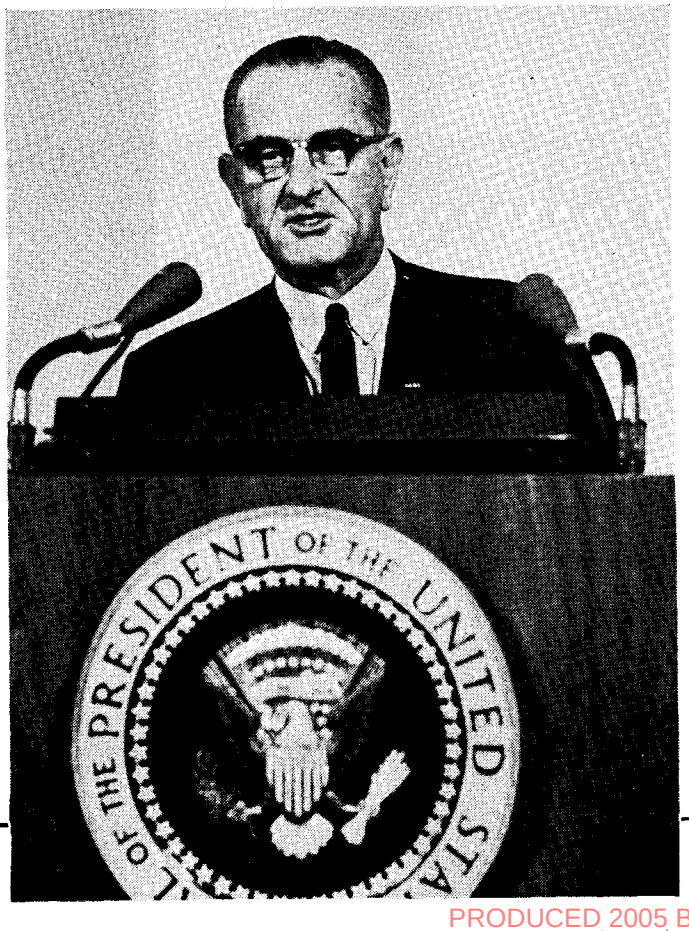
It was not the statistics, however, that first led me to reflect on the paradoxical relationship between participation and protest in the Vietnam War. Rather, it was the slow-dawning realization that I had never known a single family that had lost a son in Vietnam, or, indeed, one with a son wounded, missing in action, or held prisoner of war. And this despite the fact that American casualties in Vietnam are already almost equal to those of World War I. Nor am I alone in my strange plight; in talking to friends about a subject they seem eager *not* to discuss, I discover they can, they must, all say the same. As far as the university community in which I live and work is concerned, the war in Vietnam happens—on the level where blood is shed and lives are lost—primarily to others, though of course, in social, moral, and psychological terms, we are all touched, suffering along with other indignities the final one of being physically immune.

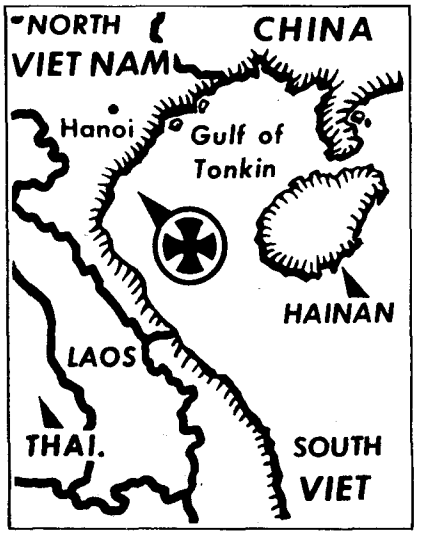
At this moment some Vietnam veterans are coming to the campuses, but I have still to meet one on my home grounds at the university in Buffalo. And I learn, consulting the statistics once more, that, though nearly half of those already released from service have taken advantage of their educational GI rights, more than half of that group have chosen vocational over university training.

No, the single person I have known well who went as a soldier to Vietnam (and returned) was black to begin with and had never been to college at all. On the other hand, I have been more or less familiar with hundreds, perhaps thousands, of young men—white and educated to the B.A. or beyond—who have protested the war they never saw. I do not mean to impugn the courage or sincerity of any of them, though they have ranged from conscientious objectors to back-row stowaways, from draft-card burners to connivers who have baffled their Selective Service boards by zonking themselves out on speed or reciting semifictional tales of their homosexuality, drug addiction, and psychosis. My own contemporaries present a mixed bag as well: organizers of teach-ins and raiders of draft boards, passers of petitions and visitors to the war zone who have gathered evidence of defoliation, terror bombings, and the burning of children. Nor have they all escaped unscathed, since even among the combatants in this less spectacular war against the war there have been casualties, too: busted heads, broken limbs, disrupted lives, expulsions, arrests, vindictive sentences, even some deaths.

No one has died on my own campus, to be sure, as at Kent State. But for a little while we, too, were occupied territory: 400 police marching smartly between the library and the parking lot, smacking their puttees with their night sticks—more, I would suppose, to reassure themselves than to terrify us. It was they who were on enemy ground, bugged by phone calls from their angry wives wanting to know when the hell they would stop playing soldier and come home. Before it was all over, there had been four nights of battle, tear gas against hurled rocks and Coke bottles, even a couple of students peppered with buckshot.

It was a battle between the students and their parents, really; between the elders who loved, if not the war in Vietnam, at least the society that supported it, and the youths who hated both that war and that society—and most of all, perhaps, those members of the society they




**"...for peace is the only purpose of the course America pursues."**

**Lyndon B. Johnson, in a speech following his request for the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, August 5, 1964**



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knew best. Of course, the parents were not there when the firing began, having called the cops in to do their dirty work; which is to say, having mustered a squad of uniformed men quite like, in class origin and degree of education, the forces in Vietnam. It was a second war being fought for them by their servants; but, since the enemy this time was their own children, it turned out to be a class war as well, with college kids confronting those who had not made it onto the campus until trouble began. On the campuses, however, those servants did better than in the rice paddies of Vietnam, for the victories of the students were small and transitory, consisting only of the political eclipse of Lyndon Johnson; a few antiwar bills introduced and defeated in Congress; the emergence of new strategies for losing a presidential election; and especially the momentary elation of the demonstrations, the mass ecstasy subsiding into frustration and baffled rage as the first war, the big war, the war elsewhere, continued.

If the students achieved relatively little, the risks they ran were relatively light. For in the cold war between the bourgeois generations there was less direct confrontation and less retrospective vindictiveness, as judges with LL.D.s mitigated what cops with high school diplomas had done earlier, dismissing cases, suspending sentences, in effect, abrogating martial law. This détente gives us the chance, perhaps, to see the struggle in a larger context, to understand that the students' war, quite like the colonial war against which it is directed, is part of a greater whole: in this case the total war against affluence and the university, waged as much on account of as in spite of the fact that together these enemies made possible that other war.

Having realized so much, we can begin to count all the casualties incurred in the war at home: not just those caught in the line of fire, but those who died of drug overdoses and in crumpled Volkswagens; those who were the victims of homemade bombs, whether their inept makers or some late-working researcher, as innocent (or guilty) as his assassins; those killed by Charles Manson and his girls, along with the less ideological patsys of big dope deals gone wrong. These are the "combat deaths," and there are the "wounded" as well: those stricken by hepatitis from improperly sterilized needles or by VD, which has grown virulent again among those at odds with "uptight" hygiene and AMA "professionalism." And finally there are the mad—a new category on official casualty lists, but surely not unknown in earlier wars. Now I recall that I have, after all, known one casualty in Vietnam: a "hippie" merchant seaman, carrying combat supplies into the war theater and dope out of it, who came unstuck in the middle of the Indian Ocean and sent me a telegram reading: "I am the Messiah. My father is dying."

But the greater number of casualties have occurred in Vietnam, of course, where not only God (Whom we have listed as dead for a century or two anyhow) but many men continue to die, though fewer and fewer of them have been Americans in recent years. "Vietnamization" has meant that our Oriental servants are doing more and more of the dying for us. From the start, however, this has been a conflict in which nonwhites have died at a disproportionate rate, and not merely because it happens to have occurred in a country inhabited by nonwhites. By the middle of October the total number of American dead was 56,164, whereas the "enemy" dead came to 900,909 and the South Vietnamese had lost 181,906 combat troops. If one adjusts these figures by subtracting the nearly 6,000 black dead from the U.S. total and adding them to the nonwhite total, the final result is approximately: U.S., 50,000; Them, 1,000,000 . . . . When the nearly 425,000 South Vietnamese civilians are taken into account, the disproportion becomes even more staggering.

Although perhaps not that surprising. The war in Vietnam seems about to turn into one in which no whites at all die. And yet it remains very much *our* war, the war we have dreamed ever since the first European set foot on American soil only to find the land he lusted for inhabited by a nonwhite people—in short, the undeclared, three-hundred-year-long war against the Indian, in the course of which we whites first became "Americans."

**1964** | **1965**



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Into the image of our first alien enemy we have assimilated all the other nonwhites encountered in our imperialist adventures ever since: the long series of swarthy Others whose homelands we were sure destiny intended to be our own and whom we therefore battled, as the Marine Corp's hymn puts it, "From the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli . . . ." Fixed in a hundred thousand works of art and sub-art, the image persists. "Remember the Alamo!" the embattled politician cries, or "Remember Custer's last stand," an apologetic journalist writes of this very war, and the proper responses arise. We are at home, back in the familiar nightmare once more.

But this time around we do not quite dare to say aloud, "The only good Injun is a dead Injun," for racism is no longer fashionable (at least among the polite), not dead, to be sure, but driven underground, into the undermind. And so we endure the pangs of a society that has outlived a value system whose mythological foundation remains firm. It has been a long time since we permitted ourselves officially to declare our hatred and fear of "gooks" and "wogs," which we still confess in our private abusive names for the Others. No official voice, for instance, cried "Yellow Peril" to justify the Second World War, which Vietnam in some sense continued, but private voices in the heat of combat cried worse. This deep-seated hatred for nonwhites may finally have been the reason why we were able to drop the atomic bomb on the Japanese though not on the Germans, on nonwhites but not whites, on Them but not Us. Certainly, the shameful war in Vietnam seems to confirm the suspicion that a lust for genocide rather than mere strategy cued the double bombing of Japan. For how can we read, without the aid of such mythology, this strange conflict in Southeast Asia that rejected even the traditional name of war while providing us with daily "body counts"? How unendurable they finally became, those totals reckoned in each morning's newspaper: for every enemy soldier killed, we soon learned, a three-day pass, quite like the seventeenth-century bounty of five pounds for every Indian scalp. It was as if we were moving grimly to the point where, checking the last figures, we would discover we had them all, *all*!

But even though the dream of total destruction is thus inadvertently confessed in the press, we have denied ourselves the instrument of total destruction this time around: no Big Bomb (though certain reactionary voices continued to call for it), only hand-to-hand combat, sniper answering sniper, the helicopters swooping low on missions of rescue and supply. To be sure, there are "little" bombs in great plenty, but somehow these do not register in our mythological imaginations, only in theirs. For us the prevailing image of the war is one of infiltration: the sneak attack from their side; from ours the war against the very trees, the burning out by jellied fire of the forest that conceals and the guerrillas that it conceals. And always no atomic bomb! It is not just a last delicate scruple of hypocrisy, the resolve to destroy utterly without quite seeming to do so—for what is the difference between a single payload of atomic magnitude and thousands of smaller raids adding up to the same total? It is also a deliberate decision—not less deliberate for being secret even from ourselves—to reinvent and reenact Indian warfare, in what must surely prove the last episode of our long combat with the nonwhite world.

Maybe, if we had been able to say aloud, "The only good Injun is a dead Injun," this war would have been over long ago and the next would have begun. But in the face of fact and probability we talked instead of national interest and containment and the threat of Communism (which somehow no hawk has ever been able to persuade us to fight in Europe, only in Asia). When will we realize that, in the bad dream our longest-lived myth has become, those "Reds" we fight turn out to be not Communists but *Peaux-Rouges*—Apaches, Mohicans, and Custer-killing Sioux? □

**"One friend of mine went to the village to get rice for his mother and father. He crossed the field, and the airplanes saw him and shot and killed him so you couldn't even see his body. It was scattered all over the field."**

**—A twelve-year-old Vietnamese boy**



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The Cost in National Treasure

# $400,000,000,000 PLUS

*By Robert Lekachman*

## The dollar cost is staggering, says the author; yet there is more to be reckoned: inflation, unemployment, and—worse— a diversion of public resources, attention, and commitment from domestic reform.

What has been the cost of the war in Vietnam?

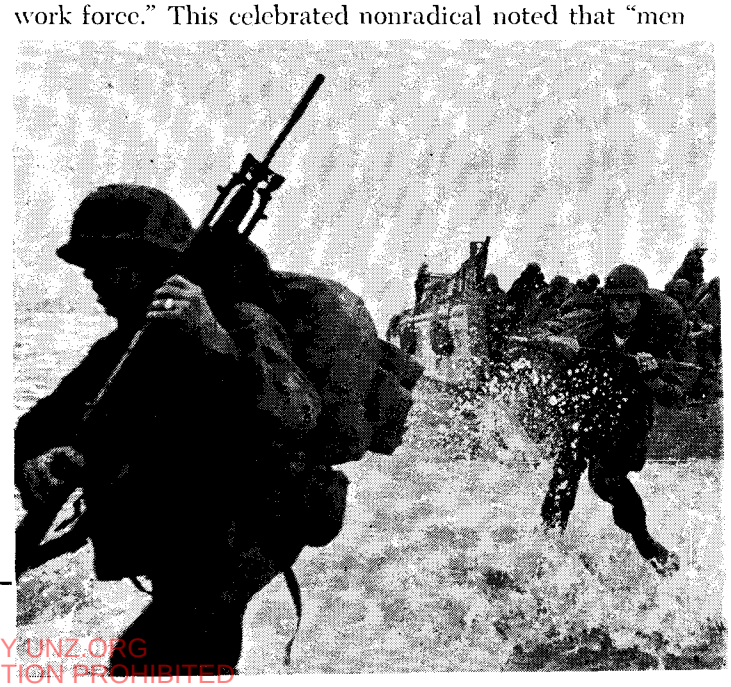
A place to begin is with the official figures. According to the Pentagon, the incremental expense of the war by the middle of 1972 amounted to approximately $110 billion. Naturally, that number drastically underestimates the war's true financial burden. The Pentagon has not yet counted the cost of massive renewed bombing. Also excluded are such items as the $700 million that we are giving this year to the Saigon government, Cambodia, and Laos as "economic aid." The military's figure does not record CIA expenditures in support of its private army of mercenaries in Laos. Nor does $110 billion take into consideration the connection between Vietnam and the swollen American military establishment in Thailand, Taiwan, South Korea, and elsewhere in the Pacific—the *New York Times*'s Anthony Lewis has estimated this cost at $40 billion during the Nixon administration alone.

The conventional government reckoning overlooks the still graver long-term consequences of military adventure. Benefits to veterans will be a tax burden for decades to come; a current estimate of that final bill is, incredibly, $220 billion, under the assumption that, as has been true of our past major wars, veterans' benefits ultimately total at least twice the original cost of the war. Tens of thousands of permanently incapacitated men will linger expensively, not to mention painfully, in veterans' hospitals, some of them for the remainder of their lives. A still more grim calculation must be made. The fifty-five thousand young Americans who died in Vietnam during the last decade—forty-five thousand killed in action plus ten thousand noncombat dead—could have enjoyed the gift of life for an average of perhaps forty-five more years. Even economists hesitate to set a dollar price on existence, but something concrete can be said, all the same, about the value of the work these men will never perform. Assuming conservatively that each would have been employed for forty years at an average annual wage of $15,000, lifetime earnings sacrificed in this war approximate $600,000 per man. Multiplied by 55,000, the result is the waste of the products of $33 billion of human labor. The country will be the poorer permanently, not merely temporarily, because of these deaths.

The much larger number who survived their year in combat more or less intact wasted their energies while they were in uniform. So did the civilians who facilitated their activities. At the 1968 peak of our Vietnam commitment American military personnel physically in Vietnam numbered 536,100. An additional 263,900 were either in training or manning lines of communications. A civilian contingent of 250,000 was directly engaged in the conflict. Altogether 1,050,000 men and women that year were doing destructive instead of useful tasks. It is one of the several idiocies of the way government experts calculate the Gross National Product that the wages of these 1,050,000, like other Vietnam outlays, were solemnly computed in year-to-year expansion of national output. No wonder that people of average income were certain that their own economic situation was stagnating or even deteriorating, even as national-income estimators were reassuring one and all that real per-capita income was on the increase. The rise consisted, in dreadful part, of the bombs raining on our friends and foes and the craters that now speckle the lunar landscapes of Indochina.

Adding up the dollars thus far, the total cost of the war reaches $400 billion—and that is a conservative estimate.

Yet Vietnam has consumed still more. Federal Reserve Board Chairman Arthur F. Burns, intermittent friend and adviser of President Nixon, observed in 1968 that "a mere count of numbers . . . does not convey adequately the drain of the defense establishment on the nation's work force." This celebrated nonradical noted that "men



*Robert Lekachman teaches economics at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. He is author of* The Age of Keynes *and the forthcoming* National Income and Social Priorities.



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differ in quality, and we need to take account of the fact that those involved in the defense effort are, on the average, superior from an economic viewpoint to workers engaged in civilian production." War managers in modern times have a taste for soldiers with skills, and the defense industries have similar preferences for the better engineers, technicians, and scientists. At the height of the war, still according to Dr. Burns, "One out of every five of the nation's electrical and mechanical engineers in civilian jobs, two out of every five airplane mechanics, two out of every five physicists outside of teaching, and three out of every five aeronautical engineers were employed on defense goods." Because Dr. Burns's conservative credentials are in such splendid order, his summary judgment deserves special attention: "During the decade from 1957 to 1966, our nation spent approximately $520 billion on defense and space programs. This sum is almost two-and-one-half times as large as the entire amount spent on elementary and secondary education both public and private. It is two-and-three-quarters times as large as the amount spent on the construction of new housing units. It exceeds by over a fourth the expenditure on new plant and equipment by the entire business community."

We have accompanied Dr. Burns beyond Vietnam to an evaluation of the general burden of the defense establishment upon the economy. Suppose we return to the Pentagon's modest $110 billion, where we began, and brood for a spell over what we as a nation might have purchased without Vietnam. For a start, financial poverty might have been completely eliminated. Who now recalls Lyndon Johnson's unconditional war against poverty, circa 1964? Only eight years later it has become something of a national sport and a social-science fashion to blame the poor for their own plight. Nevertheless, for the nostalgic, the poverty gap—measured as the income deficiencies of families below the current $4,000 poverty line—varied between $11 and $14 billion annually during 1965–1972. That $110 billion would have paid the poverty bill with something to spare.

Consider a less altruistic use of the money. This year the candidates crisscrossed the land, promising property-tax relief. In the aggregate, property taxes amount to about $40 billion each year. In the absence of the Vietnam incubus these levies could have been reduced by about two-fifths in *each* of the last seven years.

In 1968 the housing census, using restrained criteria, identified six million substandard dwellings. With $110 billion the construction industry could have built each family incarcerated in urban slum or rural hovel an $18,000 house and, incidentally, conferred upon the hardhats of the United States utterly unprecedented affluence. Instead, the higher interest rates generated by the necessities of war finance severely crippled residential and public construction and cost the nation each year as many as 750,000 units of housing. Anyone can compile his own list of the hospitals, schools, parks, prisons, and mass transportation of which Vietnam has robbed us.

It is legitimate to wonder whether a country that in 1966 ranked eighteenth in infant mortality, that in 1967 rejected 28.5 per cent of potential draftees because of physical defects, that accepted a drop in the ratio of physicians to population of from 109 per 100,000 in 1950 to 98 per 100,000 in 1966, that in 1969 allowed ten million Americans to go to bed hungry, and that

**The bombing "is something like the repetitive strokes of a jackhammer, if you will. At some point, the concrete begins to break up."**
**—Gen. Harold K. Johnson**

**I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die Rag**
*by Country Joe McDonald*

*Well come on all of you big strong men*
*Uncle Sam needs your help again*
*Got himself in a terrible jam*
*Way down yonder in Viet-Nam*
*Put down your books and pick up your gun*
*We're gonna have a whole lot of fun*

*CHORUS:*
*And it's one-two-three what are we fighting for*
*Don't ask me—I don't give a damn*
*The next stop is Viet-Nam*
*And it's five-six-seven open up the pearly gates*
*Well, there ain't no time to wonder why*
*Whoopee, we're all gonna die.*

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countenanced (any year) the physical decay of its major cities, was really rich enough to afford an unnecessary war. Especially a war whose "benefits," in Richard Barnett's words, "have gone for the most part to the owners and managers of contracting corporations, high-salaried engineers and scientists, better-than-average-paid bureaucrats, military officers, and those who service them."

The war generated another set of costs less easy to measure than the resources wasted, skills misapplied, poverty undiminished, and homes unbuilt. Until the middle part of 1965, when President Johnson commenced his escalation of the conflict, the American economy was experiencing an unusually stable prosperity. Kennedy-Johnson policies of fiscal stimulus and monetary ease, buttressed by a reasonably effective incomes policy, which featured wage-price "guideposts" but not controls, had steadily reduced unemployment until it approached the 4 per cent interim target set by the Council of Economic Advisers, promoted modernization of industrial plants through the investment tax credit, revived economic growth rates, and improved the competitive situation of American businessmen in world markets.

A high rate of economic growth, accompanied by stable prices, was a genuine achievement of the New Economics practiced by Walter Heller and his colleagues on the Kennedy-Johnson Council of Economic Advisers. Even after the sharp 1964 tax cut the economy was strong enough to increase the actual amount of taxes flowing into the Treasury. This fiscal dividend from economic growth financed such New Frontier–Great Society programs as the War on Poverty, Medicare, Model Cities, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and a dazzling array of other health, education, housing, environmental, and urban-renewal programs. The implicit social compact between President and people that made the whole operation viable was the delivery of a dollar or two of tax relief for every dollar freshly devoted to the alleviation of the poor.

Lyndon Johnson's devotion to the Great Society was beyond any doubt. Unhappily for him and for his constituents, however, he added as a second hobby the Vietnam War. In the middle of 1965 the course of candor for the President would have been to inform the American people about the scale of their new imperial responsibilities and then seek from Congress the sort of tax increase that body had routinely enacted in response to previous military emergencies. As the Pentagon Papers amply documented, few of the war managers really believed that victory in Southeast Asia would be either speedy or cheap. Nevertheless, Lyndon Johnson preferred to disguise the scale of the impending American effort well into 1966. The budget message early in that year included no call for more taxes. The President's Council of Economic Advisers, increasingly worried about the prospect of incipient inflation, was soothed by an underestimate of a cool $10 billion in Vietnam outlays for the new year. Although prey to growing doubts about ultimate American victory, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara either deliberately concealed the facts from his own colleagues in government or indulged himself in the sort of wishful thinking that this master of computers was widely advertised to avoid.

Why was deceit so long continued? Harry McPherson, who worked for Johnson both in the Senate and the White House, claims that "he was trying to summon up just enough martial spirit and determination in the people to sustain a limited war, but not so much as to unleash the hounds of passion that would force him to widen it." The course of presidential prudence was to hide the facts from Americans who might associate higher taxes with wider wars. For Vietnam was not like other and more popular wars. After Pearl Harbor Franklin Roosevelt announced to general public acclaim that for the duration Dr. Win-the-War must supersede Dr. New Deal. He promptly sought higher taxes. By contrast, the war in Asia commanded so little support that in his own memoirs Lyndon Johnson justified delay in asking for money to pay for it by arguing that "we had no chance of winning" congressional assent. The familiar coalition of Republicans and southern Democrats, which by 1966 was reasserting its influence, would have compelled the President to choose between the war and the Great Society if he had leveled with them and the nation over the scale and cost of the conflict. Accordingly, Johnson decided to retain both the war in Vietnam

**"We cannot assert that a policy of sustained reprisal will succeed in changing the course of the contest in Vietnam. It may fail and we cannot estimate the odds of success with any accuracy—they may be somewhere between 25% and 75%. What we can say is that even if it fails, the policy will be worth it . . . ."**

McGeorge Bundy, in a memo to President Johnson, February 1965

**1965**

**2500 Ministers, Priests and Rabbis Say:**

**MR. PRESIDENT:**

## *In the Name of God,* STOP IT!

We are aware of the awesome responsibilities you carry; we can imagine the difficulties of making important decisions in the face of conflicting advice from many sources; nor do we doubt your devotion to this nation or to the great goal of peace among all nations. Yet in offering our concerns over American involvement in Vietnam we must be as blunt as honesty requires us to be.

Mr. President, every one of us is deeply, personally dismayed by the role the United States is playing in Vietnam.

It is not a light thing for an American to say that he is dismayed by his country's actions. We do not say it lightly, but soberly and in deep distress. Our government's actions in Vietnam have been and continue to be unworthy either of the high standards of our common religious faith, or of the lofty aspirations on which this country was founded.

. . . .

Now the United States has begun the process of extending the war beyond the borders of South Vietnam, with all the attendant dangers of precipitating a far greater conflict, perhaps even on a global and nuclear scale.

Mr. President, we plead with you to reverse this course. Let us admit our mistakes and work for an immediate cease-fire. Let us call a conference of all the nations involved, including China, not alone to conclude peace but to launch at once a major and cooperative effort to heal and rebuild that wounded land.

Let us declare our intention to withdraw our troops, calling on other states to do the same, thereby allowing the Vietnamese the right of self-determination. We cannot dictate their course, and we may well regret it, but the risk is to be preferred over the certainty that the moral bankruptcy of our present policy is setting the stage for the ultimate victory of totalitarian forces, and even of thermonuclear war.

The prophets and teachers of our Judeo-Christian faith admonished the people of their day, and of all times, to go beyond the old restraints by which injuries might be exactly recompensed, and instead to deal with their enemies with love and good deeds. Yet in Vietnam this nation, so proudly self-described as "under God," is not content even with "eye for an eye" retaliation, but returns evil for evil on a multiplying scale.

No nation has ever saved either its life or its soul by such methods, and ours will not be an exception. As men and women who have committed their lives to the attempt to explain and interpret the will of God, we have no alternative but to assert on every occasion and in every way open to us our conviction that these methods are not God's methods, but will bring the judgment of God upon our nation.

Mr. President, we plead with you with the utmost urgency to turn our nation's course, before it is too late, from cruelty to compassion, from destruction to healing, from retaliation to reconciliation, from war to peace.

**Clergymen's Emergency Committee for Vietnam**

of the Fellowship of Reconciliation



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and the Great Society at home and hope for the best.

In so doing, he accepted the prospect, and shortly the reality, of inflation. (Inflation usually accompanies war because in wartime great numbers of productive workers are diverted from their normal pursuits to become soldiers and defense workers. Such persons continue to receive wages but no longer produce goods. As a result there are soon too many dollars chasing too few goods. Prices increase. Wages spiral up to keep pace. And the purchasing power of the dollar diminishes accordingly.) One of the hidden effects of inflation is the way in which it enriches the already rich and adroit and penalizes the weak and vulnerable. The 1966–1968 bull market, memorably detailed by 'Adam Smith' in *The Money Game,* was a wonderful period for conglomerateurs and promoters of special situations in ecology, leisure, geriatrics, and high technology. The young financial wizards, whom 'Smith' calls "gunslingers," appeared to possess the magical touch that attracts money just as presidents collect sycophants. Things were not so lovely for everybody. Unions like the UAW, which had bartered away cost-of-living escalator protection in reliance on continued price stability, shortly discovered that they were locked into three-year bargains that left their members suddenly vulnerable to ascending food, housing, and service prices. The elderly, particularly the families compelled to subsist on private pensions, suffered severe erosion in already meager stipends. Even the increased benefits usually voted in election years to social-security recipients came belatedly and in amounts too small to compensate for past price increases.

When Richard Nixon entered the White House in January 1969, inflation was eroding the dollar at an annual rate of 6 per cent, but unemployment, significantly, stood at only 3.4 per cent—lower than it had been at any time since the Korean War. Surveying this situation, the Nixon administration promised to halt inflation without increasing unemployment and causing a recession.

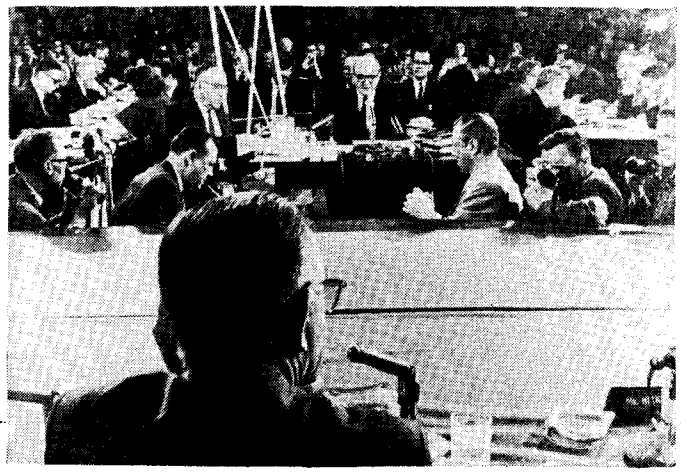
There is a trade-off, as economists but not politicians routinely concede, between inflation and unemployment. For when an administration rushes to slow inflation by reducing public spending on social programs, tightening credit, and thus reducing profits, an increased rate of unemployment inevitably results.

In modern economics the medicine is exceedingly slow to work its wonders. The first two Nixon years, influenced by the advice of the University of Chicago's Milton Friedman to curtail the expansion of the money supply, reduced the advance of inflation only infinitesimally, although unemployment nearly doubled and the restrictive monetary policy severely pinched home builders, local governments, and small businessmen, who found it more and more difficult and expensive to borrow money. Powerful corporations and the stronger unions simply refused to accept a check in the rate at which they raised their prices and paychecks.

Possibly shaken by the disappointing Republican performance in the 1970 congressional elections, early in 1971 Mr. Nixon announced that he was, after all, a Keynesian, concerned like other members of that tribe about unemployment and willing to stimulate the economy by resorting to more government spending and lower taxes. When the new magic worked little better than the old, on August 15, 1971, the President summoned in effect a new medicine man—without, of course, ever mentioning his dreadful name. This latest prophet was John Kenneth Galbraith, who for years had been advocating wage and price controls as the only way to tame the market power exerted by giant corporations and aggressive unions. And thus by mid-1972 Mr. Nixon and his economic managers at length succeeded in approximately halving the rise in the cost of living, though it is dangerous to retail this information to a shopper just returned from a morning at the local supermarket.

But the really disastrous failures of Nixon policy concern unemployment. After covertly engineering a recession that shoved the measured rate of unemployment (a serious underestimate of the true figure) up to 6.2 per cent, his election-year drive toward a new boom has resulted only in a trimming of that rate to 5.5 per cent. This figure, of course, does not represent the far more serious costs of protracted unemployment among blacks, teen-agers, women, and inner-city residents. This is a matter not only of the lost output, curtailed profits, retarded economic growth, and the postponed public improvements already noted; more alarming, it is a toll of human despair, incitement to violence, and further alienation of groups that do not lack for grievances against an American celebration that traditionally has excluded them.

Arthur Okun has accurately summarized the Nixon record: ". . . consumer prices have already risen 18 points since the beginning of 1969, more than in the previous Kennedy-Johnson 8 years combined; the accumulated product gap between full employment is mounting to over $175 billion; the total of unemployment above early 1969 levels represents over 6 million man years of labor; corporate profits after taxes in 1969–72 are actually down from 1965–68 totals, marking the first 4-year period of stagnation since the thirties; the federal deficits for 1970–73 are exceeding $75 billion, more than the combined deficits of Johnson, Kennedy and Eisenhower





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over 16 years; the annual growth of GNP under the Nixon Administration has been 2½ per cent, which puts us along with the United Kingdom in the cellar of the world growth league."

Boom or no boom, again in Dr. Okun's words, "Twenty months after the end of the recession, manufacturing output is barely back to its level of mid-1969; and factory jobs are below those levels by more than 1 million; productivity stands at least 4 percentage points below its normal trend; and the nation has a 5½ per cent unemployment rate and a 3 per cent inflation rate." A partisan Democrat but a careful economist as well, Dr. Okun judged that "by the accepted standards of grading U. S. economic performance during the last generation, the position of the economy today has to receive a failing grade."

I come now to the loss of public morale, which, after actual Vietnamese and American deaths and injuries, is the gravest of all the penalties imposed by the war. Like rich empires of the past, the United States usually is in a conservative mood. Public support for substantial social change occurs infrequently and only after an accumulation of group grievances and flagrant injustices has built up pressures for change powerful enough to overcome congressional sabotage, bureaucratic resistance, and self-satisfaction on the part of the beneficiaries of existing social arrangements. Woodrow Wilson's first term capitalized on such an opening. But another two decades and the largest of all depressions were needed to create the New Deal. That untidy but creative episode continues to shape American life. Among Franklin Roosevelt's bequests are social security, unemployment benefits, deposit insurance, stock-exchange regulation, mortgage guarantees, and farm subsidies.

As Lyndon Johnson acutely perceived, he held in his hands the first chance since the New Deal to enact significant social legislation. Favoring circumstances included an unusually liberal Congress, which arrived after the Goldwater debacle, a rising tide of activism among the poor and the black, and the highly serviceable Kennedy mystique. Lyndon Johnson's Great Society was a hastily improvised collage of strategies, among them better services for the poor, medical care for the elderly, man-power retraining, increased income maintenance for pensioners, and sporadic attempts to redistribute power from city halls to community groups.

Model Cities was an experiment in urban improvement through coordination of social and public services. The Community Action Programs were exercises in the promotion of grassroots leadership and the enhancement of the political influence of usually passive low-income urban constituencies. Some of the Great Society programs were no better administered than they were drafted and coordinated. Strategies were eclectic rather than consistent. Too often the programs of the Office of Economic Opportunity fell into the hands of local ideologues or timeservers or, even worse, as in Mayor Richard Daley's barony, into the control of the conventional politicians whom they were intended to countervail.

After this is said, it remains the case that the Great Society gave new benefits, in particular to the poor. Possibly even more important, it accorded a measure of recognition to women, blacks, welfare recipients, and other neglected or persecuted groups. The devoted young lawyers who turned Neighborhood Legal Services into the most successful of Great Society innovations fought important test cases to the Supreme Court. Their frequent victories substantially enhanced the rights of welfare recipients, women, blacks, migrant farm workers, and public-housing residents.

It is essential to measure accurately the promise as well as the actual performance of the Great Society because the current intellectual vogue, conservative and liberal, is extreme humility about the possibilities of social change through government action. Conservative tradition emphasizes the inflexibility of human behavior, the durability of institutional arrangements, the pervasiveness of class and racial differentiations, and the consequential modesty of the results reasonably to be anticipated from government efforts at social meliorism. For the time being at least, the tacit allies of the conservatives are former New Frontiersmen and Great Societarians, particularly the economists among them, who have been passing their political exile in such havens as the Kennedy Institute at Harvard and the Brookings Institution in Washington. These toilers in the statistical vineyards are rediscovering the limitations of the resources available to the federal government and reassessing glumly the impact of liberal Democratic efforts during the 1960s to diminish poverty and deprivation. The Brookings study, *Setting National Priorities: The 1973*

**June 29, 1966—North Vietnam's capital, Hanoi, and its main port, Haiphong, are bombed by U.S. planes for the first time.**

**1966**



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*Budget*, published last spring, included a confession, topic by topic, of liberal remorse. According to the authors, no man alive can say whether compensatory education, racial integration, community control—or an appropriate mixture—represents an acceptable, let alone the optimum, way to help the children of the poor enough to survive. All that the housing experts currently claim with conviction is that urban renewal and public housing are complete or partial disasters. The health specialists have not yet designed a plausible scheme to combine such vital objectives as delivery of good medical and hospital care to everyone, protection of the victims of medical catastrophe from penury, and limitation of soaring hospital and physicians' charges. So it goes. Whether job-training programs actually help their clients get and keep better jobs is anybody's guess. And almost nobody, not even the social worker, appears to believe that social services have substantially benefited large numbers of welfare recipients.

This mood, I emphasize, is a major Vietnam cost. Great Society programs, barely launched before the war escalated, have been fiscally stunted. Far more seriously, they have been deprived of adequate congressional and public attention. Any rational observer would have expected a decade or more of modification, experiment, and improvement before Great Society innovations operated with something of the smoothness of the Internal Revenue Service or the Social Security Administration. But the politics of Vietnam dissolved that implicit social contract that allowed Lyndon Johnson to emulate Franklin Roosevelt—tax cuts for the prosperous and help for the poor. Once benefits for the vulnerable had to come from the incomes of the public at large, the general mood turned sour and became suspicious both of the conduct of the beneficiaries of social programs and of the politicians responsible for those programs.

Taking all of these costs into account—the strictly monetary, as well as the social and political—Vietnam has fair claim to being the most costly war in American history. □

## The Effect on Social Programs

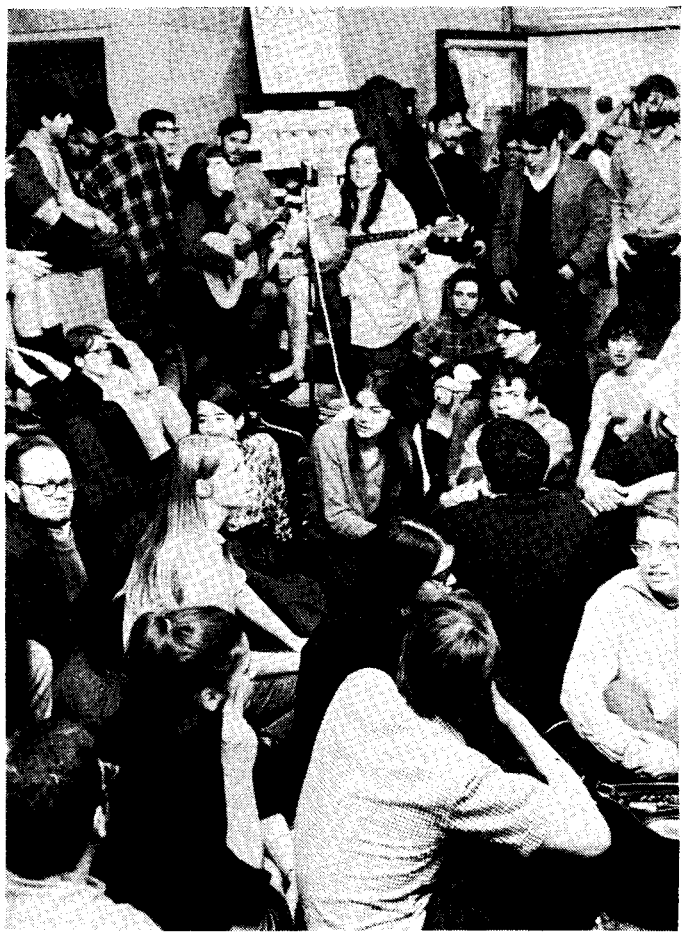
# THE GREAT SOCIETY WAS NEVER A CASUALTY OF THE WAR

*By Nathan Glazer*

Conventional wisdom has it that the cost of the war necessitated a cutback in social programs. Not true, says the author, in contrast to the preceding essayist. The funding of most such programs has shot up right along with the increase in military spending. He explains how.

There is reason enough to decry the war in Vietnam for itself—for the lives lost, both Vietnamese and American; for the damage done to Vietnamese property and land; for the costs to the American economy; and for the drastic and tragic transformation of America's image—as a basically good nation—in the world at large and among its own people. But *should* we also blame the war, as so many have lately urged, for the destruction of an epochal American commitment to attack the nation's social problems—including poverty, urban decay, ill-health, and racial inequality? Is it true that the Great Society was among the first casualties of Vietnam?

Certainly, this assumption has become the conventional



*Nathan Glazer is a professor of education and social structure at Harvard. His latest book is* Remembering the Answers: Essays on the American Student Revolt.



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wisdom, recited by opponents of the war and by proponents of "reordering our priorities," by social scientists and congressmen, and by mayors from John Lindsay to Richard Daley. Yet the proposition that the war has taken a severe toll on America's social programs is, upon close examination, very much open to question.

At first glance, the most forceful case for the proposition appears to rest with the history of the two major social programs that were launched with great fervor in the mid-Sixties but were stunted in their infancy as the war expanded in Vietnam. These were the antipoverty and the Model Cities programs. But was the stunting of either program primarily attributable to the war? Probably not.

Let's look first at the poverty program, which was perhaps the best publicized of the many social programs launched in the 1960s and which best symbolized the new sweep of social policy, with its broad catalogue of innovative organizations and services—community action groups, Headstart, legal services for the poor, comprehensive health services for the poor, the Job Corps, the Neighborhood Youth Corps, Vista, and many other projects too numerous to mention or recall.

After much intensive planning the war on poverty was launched in 1964 under an umbrella agency called the Office of Economic Opportunity. The OEO started with a $1.5-billion-a-year budget and dispensed its funds with amazing speed and effectiveness in the first half of 1965 under the energetic direction of Sargent Shriver. (I speak of effectiveness, not as it was later to be evaluated, but as it was understood by government in those days: get it out, get it spent for the purposes for which Congress appropriated it, and get it spent without undue scandal. It was only later that people asked, Did it work?) But, though very sizable, the original $1.5-billion-budget level was to be only a nest egg. Robert Levine, who served for a time as the OEO's assistant director for research, plans, programs, and program evaluation, describes in his book *The Poor Ye Need Not Have With You* the boundless ambitions of the early poverty warriors—including President Johnson himself. The request for appropriations for the second year of the OEO, he relates, came to $3.5 billion. And a five-year prospectus was drawn up in which the OEO would concentrate on a three-pronged program—consisting of some kind of negative income tax and/or family allowance scheme for the poor, public employment (it was estimated the public sector could use 4.5 million jobs), and expanded community action. In the summer of 1965, Levine reports, President Johnson invited Shriver to a Cabinet meeting at which the President said to one member of the Cabinet after another, "You save money on your programs," and then, addressing all members, "You-all give it to *him* [Shriver]."

But in September 1965 the White House abruptly drew back from the poverty war. It did so, in part, Levine writes, "because of the rapidly increasing fiscal demands of the Vietnam War." There was, however, another major cause of this retreat—a political resistance to the war on poverty that was quite independent of the war in Vietnam and that Levine attributes to "administrative chaos and program excess . . . ." He goes on: "The mayors of the United States had descended upon Vice-President Humphrey, Mr. Johnson's envoy to the cities, and had given him the word as to what had been happening in their cities and what they thought of it . . . ." What was happening, to the great distress of the mayors, was that the OEO was threatening the city fathers' political bases by financing local projects and dispensing patronage through organizations answerable to Washington and not to City Hall.

In 1965, too, the war on poverty began to feel the voters' unease over what Senator-elect Charles Percy of Illinois then termed "the whole civil rights–civil disorder question." Watts exploded into riots that summer; its upheaval was repeated in a number of other ghettos across the country; and these explosions made many people deeply doubtful about programs to help the poor. "The recipients are ungrateful," people said or felt. "The poverty program employs agitators. Why rebuild the slums when they only burn them down?"

A reckoning was made in the White House and in Congress, and, instead of reaching the $3.5-billion level projected for its second year, the OEO budget was barely increased at all, from $1.5 billion to $1.75 billion. Robert Levine concludes that "there is no way to separate out the fiscal/military causes of this setback from the political causes." And, indeed, there is not. Nor is there in the similar braking of the Model Cities program. Almost as ambitious in its early conception as the poverty war, and based on much the same philosophy, Model Cities was initially envisioned as replacing urban renewal projects that had aimed to rebuild cities in a physical sense. Model Cities was to be much more grand; it would harness the energies, imagination, and organizational capacities of the poor themselves in the revitalization of the decaying areas of the cities. Even this was only the beginning. But Model Cities went through so many transformations between its initiation and actual implementation that it is doubtful that anything much was expected

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from the program by most of those involved in it by the time Model Cities began to function. Furthermore, in establishing separate local governmental bodies to devise and manage its projects, Model Cities ran into a concrete obstacle: there already *were* local governments, elected by the people, which quite properly insisted on their prerogatives. Another fundamental problem cropped up, too: a growing realization that no one really knew what kind of social programs would solve the problems that beset the cities. And thus, in the face of competition with established governmental organizations, coupled with uncertainty about how useful the Model Cities programs would actually be, political resistance to Model Cities grew faster than the programs themselves. Undoubtedly, this opposition helped to stunt the early ambitions associated with these programs fully as much as did any drain on federal revenues attributable to the Vietnam War.

So, although two of the best-known social programs of the Sixties did indeed suffer setbacks that coincided with escalation in Vietnam, it is by no means certain that they would not have come to grief in any case.

But the proposition that the Vietnam War undermined America's social programs is even more sternly challenged by the fact that other, and in some cases bigger, programs were clearly not undermined at all; some not only escaped the trimming that put a crimp in the anti-poverty and Model Cities budgets and ambitions, but they actually burgeoned even as the war budget itself expanded.

Where were these areas of heavy increase in domestic expenditure? They were the new programs of Medicare and Medicaid, which rose from nothing in the mid-1960s to an estimated $17.5 billion, together, for 1973. Housing subsidies, only a few hundred million in the mid-Sixties, are expected to leap to $1.8 billion for 1973. Food stamps and other nutrition programs have soared from a few hundred million to $2.5 billion. Student aid will cost $3.4 billion. Even though no new welfare program has been enacted by Congress, the old one has expanded at an enormous rate from a few billion in federal costs in the early Sixties to $16.1 billion for 1973.

What is truly astonishing, after all, is that the commitment to the expansion of social programs, of aid to education, of support for health care and health costs, of job training, of income maintenance, of food stamps and other programs to increase the consumption of food by low-income groups, has, on the whole and on the presidential level, grown so steadily throughout the terrible war period.

Both Presidents Johnson and Nixon clearly were unwilling to cut into most social programs, or severely inhibit their growth, in order to pay for the war. President Johnson once declared that he was not even under significant pressure to do so. In his economic report of 1966 he wrote: "We face the challenges of prosperity while some 200,000 of our fellow citizens and billions of dollars of our resources are engaged in a bitter defense of freedom in Vietnam. The true costs of this conflict are death, pain, and grief . . . . But the *economic* cost of Vietnam imposes no unbearable burden on our resources . . . . Production for Vietnam accounts for less than 1½ percent of our GNP."

President Nixon has taken very much the same stance. It is as if in this war the Presidents were embarrassed to call upon the people for sacrifices. Charles L. Schultze, a former Bureau of the Budget director under Johnson, and his colleagues analyzed the course of domestic spending in their Brookings Institution study of domestic programs *Setting National Priorities: The 1973 Budget,* which was published last spring. Not only did domestic spending climb as the war progressed, the Brookings report noted, but the increments from year to year have grown larger and larger. Thus, for the years 1960 to 1965, the annual rate of increase was 5.8 per cent per year; for 1965 to 1970, it was 9.1 per cent; and for 1970 to 1973, the average annual expansion in the domestic budget will be about 10.3 per cent.

In other words, throughout the war the United States has hardly stinted on butter to pay for guns; in fact, we have spent ever increasing amounts to cover both.

How have we been able to afford the guns without

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cutting into the butter, inasmuch as neither Johnson nor Nixon has seen it politically fit to raise taxes? We have paid for the war, not through cuts in social programs, but through huge budget deficits and, ultimately, inflation—a whopping $25-billion deficit in 1968, $23-billion in 1971, $39-billion in 1972. Thus have the guns—and, it is clear, a good part of the butter, too—been financed. Nixon's deficits, in fact, have been due more to butter than to guns; in 1971 and 1972, after all, the cost of the war dropped to progressively smaller fractions of the deficit—about $11 billion and $6.8 billion for these two years, according to the Schultze study.

Still, if social programs have clearly not been cut back to pay for the war, can it not at least be said that they would have grown larger and faster if so many billions of dollars had not been siphoned off to Vietnam, or that our imagination would even have found new forms of social expenditure?

Certainly, this is a strong possibility. Perhaps we would have started a large program for urban mass transportation (but Congress has up to now refused to accept such a program even when it involves no new sources of funds). Perhaps we would have started earlier and on a larger scale great works to deal with water pollution. Undoubtedly, the $110 billion or more in direct costs that has gone into the pointless destruction of Vietnam and its people could better have been spent at home. But whether it *would* have been spent publicly or returned to private citizens in the form of tax cuts is another question.

The American people, in their wisdom or lack of it, have, in fact, chosen to reduce their taxes a number of times during the course of the war—and that may be the ultimate contradiction to the proposition that the country's social programs have suffered because of the war, or at least would be further along except for the war. The distinct possibility is that Americans would have put the war money into their own pockets instead of into social programs, if there had been no Vietnam. But, of course, we will never know that for sure. □

## The Consequences for South Vietnam

# EACH DAY IS A SEPARATE ORDEAL

*By Gloria Emerson*

"The effects of the war on Vietnam have been so deep and so disruptive," writes a veteran foreign correspondent, "that it is hard for me to imagine, even with peace, how a healing process could take place in my lifetime."

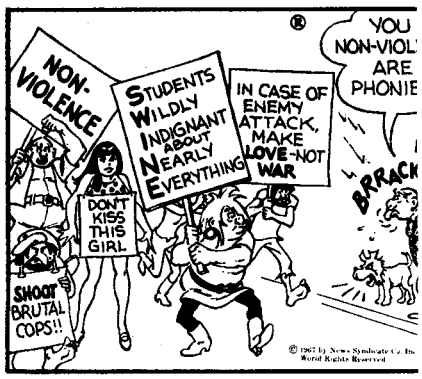
"The people of Vietnam do not like the past," a Chinese scholar wrote centuries ago. These words were written for me in Vietnamese by a fifty-eight-year-old schoolteacher in Cantho. So lightly did he press on his pencil that I cannot now see the tiny accents over the words: *viet nhon bat hieu co.* It was his way of reminding me of how the Vietnamese have loathed and fought foreign domination—one thousand years of Chinese rule, nearly a century under the French, and a decade of American "assistance and advice," as he put it. The Vietnamese appreciate irony. It is these last years that have sickened the schoolteacher and made him a man of great sadness. He did not speak his mind to the boys in his mathematics class because Vietnamese men go to jail for such opinions.

In Cambridge, where I have been living since my return from Vietnam in June, I read the morning newspapers and remember that classroom and wonder how many of those students were drafted and died at Quangtri or Dongha, on Route 1 or on Route 13, in Binhduong or at Cuchi. The teacher feared for them during the long hours he taught them geometry, as he had feared for ten classes before them.

"It is not the past that haunts me now. It is the future that makes me tremble," he said. We spoke in French.

In the graveyard called South Vietnam, where officially the population is said to be seventeen million but is surely much less by now, you do not ask a Vietnamese about the future. They do not need to go into an even deeper darkness.

New York Times *correspondent Gloria Emerson won the George Polk Award for Outstanding Foreign Reporting in 1971 for her portrayal of the effects of the war on the lives of South Vietnamese people. Currently on leave from the* Times, *she is a Fellow of the Institute of Politics at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.*



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The future is not next year for them but tonight at five o'clock when there is enough rice to eat—or not nearly enough. It is tomorrow at 6 a.m. Nothing is taken for granted. Each day is a separate ordeal. Oddly enough, it is not the faces of refugees that I remember but that of a tiny, smiling cook who worked for some Americans in Saigon. One night she suddenly burst into tears after telling me how the price of tinned milk and rice had once more risen.

"We will all die," she said. I think she meant that the Vietnamese would die from worry and exhaustion, from scrambling and scrounging and waiting for the next blow.

Hell for the Vietnamese is not in the North, as many Americans might think, where U.S. bombings and battle deaths and the ghosts of missing men would have made a weaker nation—one less persuaded of its worth and its purpose—hemorrhage to death. They are better off there than in the South. Ellen Hammer, in her classic *Struggle for Indochina, 1940–1955*, writes: "No Vietnamese can forget that Ho Chi Minh was the first Vietnamese leader to declare the independence of Vietnam. He declared an independent state in September 1945 and a free state in March 1946. When Ho Chi Minh went to war, he seemed to be the heir to the nationalist tradition of his people."

In the North they have Ho. They had him when he lived, and they have him after his death. Almost nothing will convince them that this war is not a moral crusade, and that can only strengthen them. Long years of bombing by the richest and most powerful nation in the world has shown them that their survival is a triumphant victory. Man has won over the machine. This is their banner.

The Vietnamese hell is in the South. And there it cannot be described by statistics that overwhelm and numb the mind — 400,000 Vietnamese civilians killed and 900,000 wounded between 1965 and 1972; as many as eight million villagers uprooted from their homes. South Vietnam, for me, is not a nation but a territory in which huge numbers of displaced persons live, persons who have been abused and betrayed by their government, its officials, and its allies. To survive in the chaos and rot of South Vietnam, one must not be too poor or too honest; a man must cheat. It is a country not only of the poor but of the bewildered and frightened, who see clearly that there is no one to restore order to their lives and no one to counsel and defend them. In the cities—the swollen, sickly places where refugees have bad dreams—you can see most clearly what has broken down. A man can only hope to get by if he pays and collects small bribes. *Tiền cà phê*, or "coffee money," the Saigonese call it.

Often the most desperate war widows or parents of the dead or wounded must be able to pay coffee money or else risk long delays before receiving legitimate benefits. Just to receive an application form at the Ministry of War Veterans building in Saigon to file for a pension meant, when I was last in Vietnam, giving the clerk 200 piasters—and the price has surely gone up.

"We are very miserable," Mrs. Nguyen Thi Quang, a twenty-six-year-old widow who has five children, said to me last year.

There must be Americans as miserable as Mrs. Quang was, but I have not met them. Her husband, a government soldier, was killed on February 14, 1970, in a thirty-minute fire fight in the Mekong Delta. She came to Saigon with her five children to fill out the papers for her pension, hoping this would speed things up. When I saw her, she had more than sixty required documents in a big, red folder. One corner of it had been bitten off by a rat. It worried Mrs. Quang very much that, if the papers became soiled, they would be invalid. She paid her coffee money and received a lump sum of 60,000 piasters, which was then worth about $500.

"For days I wept because of the complications," she said. "On the day when I received the money it seemed no tears were left inside me." In addition to the lump sum, she received a war widow's pension of $41, which, owing to inflation, then had the purchasing power of $12 a month—in one of the most expensive cities in the world.

We American reporters in Vietnam knew how expensive the city was, but, of course, with our American-scaled salaries and expense accounts, prices did not terrify us. I remember when I discovered, to my horror, that a young Vietnamese named Truong Hong Bac, who did laundry, was often eating the bread and a leftover fried egg on my plate after breakfast so he could save the equivalent of 27 cents a day, which is what he would ordinarily have had to spend for his own breakfast. Bac was ashamed of this. He told me that because of rising prices he thought he soon would not be able to eat even one good meal a day.

Nowhere in the South did life proceed decently, with any degree of dignity. It is true that for centuries the average Vietnamese has never been in a position to control his own environment and that he has traditionally been reluctant to act on his own initiative. Over the centuries he has been taught to accept authority at every stage of his existence, starting with his father. But this comforting framework has collapsed in the South, leaving nothing but greedy men victimizing the most frail.

To many South Vietnamese it must seem surely that the only protection against trouble is money, but even the rich do not totally escape. The war is like a filthy,



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uncontrolled river that seeps under every door, making the foundations soft and the walls weaker. We do not know how much the Vietnamese can endure, and perhaps, since they see there are no choices, they will go on enduring until the moment comes for them to speak.

The disorder and unease of South Vietnamese society have bred a selfishness that seems almost inhuman. I remember, with deep disgust, that in 1970 the survivors of the Mylai massacre had to sell the last of their possessions so they could pay the required bribes to the village office just to obtain the necessary papers for refugee resettlement benefits. They were not being compensated for the massacre, only for having been moved from their homes to another site. Indeed, the government of President Nguyen Van Thieu never acknowledged that there had been a massacre of Vietnamese civilians by American soldiers on March 16, 1968.

A sixty-year-old woman, too frightened to give me her name, said she had sold a pair of gold earrings given to her by her "mother's mother" to raise the 1,000 piasters needed for the bribe. She said this without self-pity but with a slight trace of contempt.

The village clerks of Sonmy (where the hamlet of Mylai was located) would have been astonished to have been punished for their merciless behavior. In their eyes they were doing it only to make sure their own families would not suffer. A man, after all, cannot live these days on the wages of a clerk. How often I heard this.

Before I left that cursed village in Quangngai Province, a forty-two-year-old man named Do Cam made a polite request. That was one of the few times when a Vietnamese spoke to me on behalf of others.

"I beg you to carry out your duties cleverly so that, when you leave, nobody in this hamlet will be in trouble with the government," Mr. Cam said. I promised.

The effects of the war have been so deep and so disruptive—I do not speak of bomb craters but of the Vietnamese view of themselves and of their world—that it is hard for me to imagine, even with peace, how a healing process could take place in my lifetime. A member of the Provisional Revolutionary Government's delegation to the Paris peace talks once told an American that the work of rehabilitating and restoring the South and its people would have to be the work of "many generations." The wreckage, seen and unseen, is very great.

It is not, perhaps, the bomb craters that have left the worse scars. A walk through the streets of Saigon can be more disturbing than flying over War Zone C, as the Americans used to call it, looking down at the earth. I am not an ecologist, but maybe it is possible that the good, rich earth of Cochin-China, as it was once called, will heal. I am not so sure the people can.

It was 1956 when I first went to live in Saigon. I loved that gentle, yellowy, tree-lined little city as I have loved no other place in my entire life. The war with the French had been won, and the Vietnamese seemed to stand ten feet tall—even those who planned to send their children to study in Paris. And they were tolerant of visitors like me. There were American military advisers present even then, but I did not really understand why they were there and what they were doing. I loved Vietnam. I was able to drive on the roads at night as I could never do when I returned, and there was never the noise of B-52 strikes or artillery or rifle fire. Saigon had a rich, soothing silence.

When I returned as a war correspondent fifteen years later, all had changed. Villages I had once known had disappeared. I would walk the streets of Danang, Nhatrang, and Cantho, looking for the faces of Vietnamese who had been my friends, and I could not find them. Saigon was not itself. There were bands of street children called by the Vietnamese *bui doi*, or "dust of life," a sadly perfect name for these small wanderers who had left their homes or lost them. They live by their wits and what they can steal or beg. Most of them were shoeshine boys, but there are fewer Americans now, and the Vietnamese men do not care about such refinements. It is enough just to have the shoes. Older, tougher Vietnamese boys ride two on a Honda motor bicycle, snatching handbags or wrist watches from pedestrians and taking delight in the rage of their victims. Most cities are not ideal in this decade, but Saigon is the meanest of them all.

There are little groups of lepers and the badly burned begging on Tudo Street, knowing they are despised and feared. The whores and the pimps know hard times now, for the Japanese have not come to replace the departing Americans. If I were Vietnamese, I would prefer to live in Hanoi, where there is a calm and a unity that Saigon does not know.

Bands of mutilated Vietnamese veterans, still wearing their army uniforms, move through the streets of Saigon. They frighten others because there is something in their faces that civilians do not like to see. Many of the veterans are amputees, and what is left of their poor limbs will wither and shrink because the National Institute of Rehabilitation in Saigon cannot possibly cope with the numbers of former soldiers who need new arms and legs.

In 1970 a group of Vietnamese veterans tried to demonstrate, to show the others how they felt they were being crushed in civilian life by an indifferent, ineffectual government. They spoke harshly and lifted banners, complaining of their pitiful benefits, unemployment, and inflation. It was all for nothing.

Terrence Smith, the *New York Times*'s Indochina bu-

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reau chief, and I stood on Tudo Street as it grew dark, watching the veterans prepare to spend the night on the steps of the National Assembly. In the dusk their mutilated bodies and their faces made me think of a Goya sketch. Terry, a kindly man who could bear the battlefields but not this, turned away. The veterans did not demonstrate again while I was there. They did not want to add prison to their experiences.

It was their helplessness that the veterans could not endure. It shames and maddens these men. So deep is their anger and disgust with the world that they returned to that small groups of them go into expensive Saigon restaurants to eat a meal they cannot possibly pay for. Therefore, the owners of Ramuntcho, Castel, Guillaume Tell, and Aterbea would lock the doors of their restaurants, even at noon, to keep them out. No one could enter who was not white or recognized by the staff.

Last February I was having lunch in Ramuntcho with Cyrus L. Sulzberger, a columnist for the *New York Times,* when three Vietnamese airborne officers came in. Two were on crutches. The owner, a Corsican who has lived in Saigon for many years, told them to get out. For a minute or so they stood there. After looking slowly around the room, one officer cursed us. The police came. We could only stare at our plates. I could not finish the lunch.

It is these veterans who dare to act out some of the emotions felt by so many Vietnamese in the South. The people feel that no one sees, no one cares, no one helps. Peasants must go to the cities when they are forced from their lands. Nothing is as it should be, and the war has seemed to be without an end. Perhaps what South Vietnam suffers from most—aside from grief for the wounded and the dead—is an emotional starvation. There is no sense of belonging to a history or even a country. And while all people eventually come to terms with a long war—they can hardly ignore it—whoever tries to cure and rebuild the South will have to understand the isolation and the decay of the people. They have no sense of national esteem, no feeling of their own worth.

There is fear of everything. The people, for example, fear their own soldiers, and the South Vietnamese Army fears itself.

Shortly before the North Vietnamese offensive last spring I visited, with an interpreter, the northernmost village in South Vietnam. Lactan, the smallest of six hamlets in the village of Giole, was three miles below the Demilitarized Zone. Giole is gone now, for Quangtri Province has been smashed and almost pounded to death in the recent fighting. What the people of Lactan were most anxious to tell me was how much they despised the Vietnamese marines based in the area. Perhaps they were hopeful a woman could help them, someone who was clearly not with any army at all.

"They are really unbearable. So now I must speak up," a fifty-eight-year-old farmer named Tran Van Con said. "They pass by in the night, shouting, 'Stay still in your

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houses! Anyone moving out will be shot!' And then they steal my chickens and ducks."

It was the poorest of places, that little hamlet. The farmers, having no rice fields, grew vegetables. In recent years defoliation by the Americans had caused their vegetables, especially lettuces, to come up smaller and shriveled-looking. The Vietcong were always so close that the hamlet chief did not dare sleep there at night. Yet what enraged the people the most was the behavior of their own marines, who taunted and robbed them.

After the war it is not likely that the peasants will forget what their own troops have done to them. It is a strange, unhappy army and not one to cause the populace much pride. While all armies—except for the National Liberation Front, which needs the people and wants to win them over—are indifferent to civilians, the Saigon army sometimes shows an almost insane disregard for them.

In Ducduc, a tiny district seat of huts and paths in northern Quangnam Province, villagers despised the ARVN soldiers stationed there and did not hide it.

Ducduc had been attacked by North Vietnamese and Vietcong troops in March 1971. When I was there the following summer, there was still a debate as to which side had done the most damage.

"Every time I think of the security situation here I cannot help being angered," Nguyen Tanh, a farmer, said. "The Nationalist soldiers are all cowards, and their officers have no initiative. When we were attacked, they only stuck to each other and a lot of houses were destroyed by their artillery fired point-blank, not by Communist fire."

Mr. Tanh was not sympathetic to the Vietcong, or the North Vietnamese Army. He spits on them. He spits on his own side, too. When I quoted what a Vietnamese named Nguyen Trai had written in the fifteenth century, he did not comment.

*Although we have been at times strong,*
*at times weak,*
*we have at no time lacked for heroes.*

There are no heroes for him in Ducduc, and Ducduc is all he knows.

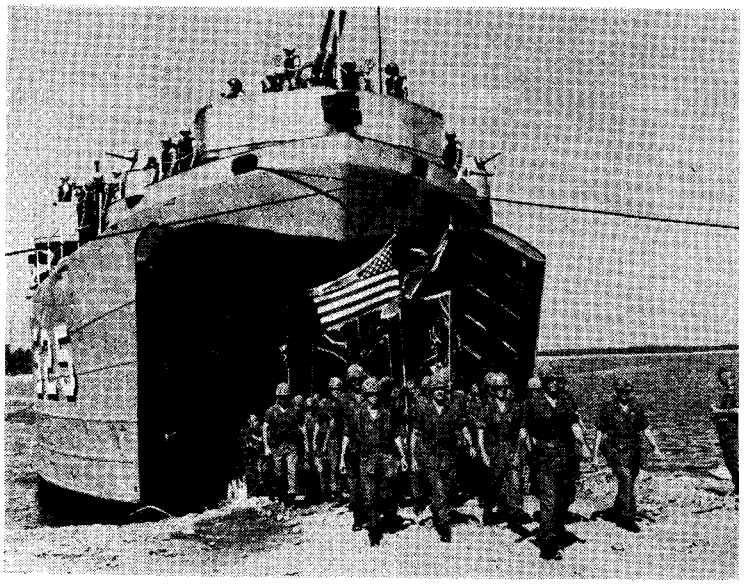
When Mrs. Julie Nixon Eisenhower earlier this year said she would "be willing to die" for the government of President Nguyen Van Thieu, while her mother, Mrs. Richard Nixon, later added that she, too, would be willing to die "to save the freedom of seventeen million South Vietnamese," I was reminded of how many soldiers in South Vietnam have an opposite point of view. The most common effect of the war on the Vietnamese in the South is to make many of them realize they do not really want to fight it.

Standing on Route 9, the highway that goes from South Vietnam into Laos, in March 1971, during the Vietnamese drive to cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Operation Lamson 719, I spoke to retreating troops. They had met the enemy, and they were running from him. For many of the 20,000 men it was the first encounter with the North Vietnamese, and never had they dreamed of anything so fierce and so frightening.

Private Moc was a twenty-two-year-old marine who had fought near a fire base about eight miles inside of Laos. He had walked and crawled through jungle for two nights and a day before being airlifted out by a U.S. helicopter.

"The last attack came at about eight p.m.," Private Moc said. "They shelled us first, and then came the tanks moving up into our positions. Our whole brigade ran down the hill like ants. We jumped on each other to get out of that place. No man had time to look for his commanding officer. It was quick, quick, quick, or we would die. Oh, God, now I know for sure that I am really alive."

What demoralized many of the troops was the large number of wounded who were left behind, survivors said, begging their friends to shoot them or to leave hand gre-



**"I wanna go to Vietnam**
**I wanna kill a Vietcong**
**With a knife or with a gun**
**Either way will be good fun**

**But if I die in the combat zone**
**Box me up and send me home**
**Fold my arms across my chest**
**Tell my folks I done my best"**

**—Army marching cadence**



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nades with which they could kill themselves before the North Vietnamese or the B-52 raids killed them. None of them had ever dreamed the enemy was so strong.

"They were everywhere, and they were so daring," Private Moc also said. "Their firepower was so enormous and their shelling so accurate that what could we do except run for our lives?"

He told how he and a small band of others "moved like ghosts" through the jungles, terrified of being ambushed, and how, to their horror, they bumped into an NVA unit during their retreat.

Private Moc knew of no words to describe the utter panic.

"We ran again like ants. And the lieutenant, he whispered to us, 'Scatter! Scatter! Don't stick together, or we will all be killed.' After each firing there were fewer and fewer of us. Nobody cared for anybody else at all."

I thought of Private Moc again this spring when the North Vietnamese offensive began, and of how he had told me that day what he wanted most was to sleep—and desert. The spring offensive, and the collapse and the retreat of the Third Infantry and Twenty-second Infantry divisions, reminded me again of what a sad, disbelieving army it is, and how they have been lied to. I suppose all soldiers are deceived, or the infantry would never move forward, but for years the Vietnamese in the South have been told the enemy was a starving phantom without supplies. The presence of the big Americans —with their Cobra gunships and Phantom jets and B-52 bombers, their helicopters and their beer and their ice in the jungle—also gave the impression it was all okay when, of course, it never was.

I do not expect that I shall ever see Private Moc again, nor shall I probably ever find out whether he is alive. But if he is, I suspect he is hiding from the war and that he will never again believe the existing Saigon government or the Saigon generals. A man can survive combat, and even a ghastly retreat. What he often loses forever is his ability to believe and trust the men who led him into that situation.

So desperately demoralized was the South Vietnamese Army, even well before the North Vietnamese attacked this year, that Gen. Nguyen Van Minh, commander of the military region that includes Saigon, admitted last year that he had "told a lie" to raise the morale of his troops during fighting on the Cambodian border.

The general radioed from his helicopter to his commanders on the ground: "We killed four thousand North Vietnamese. We have photos." The actual number of North Vietnamese killed during the ten-day operation was put by General Minh on October 5, 1971, at 450. He also admitted that he had, in addition, told his battalion commanders that South Vietnamese troops were going beyond the immediate area of fighting—which took place from sixty to ninety miles northwest of Saigon—to Chup and Memot in Cambodia.

"That was a lie, too," General Minh said. Indeed.

So pummeled and so weary were the South Vietnamese that their disbelief and suspicion, if ever heard throughout the land, would have sounded like a death rattle.

How often we said it was for the good of the Vietnamese: the bombing, the napalming, the mass expulsion of thousands of people from their homes and land so that an alien army could kill without qualm, the murder of civilians because they were unlucky enough to be in the wrong places at the wrong time, the chemical destruction, the foolish and deceptive programs to cheer up the survivors that had such names as "Brighter Life for War Victims." No, the Vietnamese are not grateful.

Ask Le Van Phuoc, once a farmer, whose only son was killed in Cambodia, a country he knows very little about. Now he is a carpenter living with his wife, his eighty-year-old mother, and the youngest of his five daughters in a one-room house on stilts on the bank of a small canal in Cantho.

He is only twenty-five miles from his home, Longtri village, where he grew rice on his father's land and tangerines and other fruits in the garden behind his house.

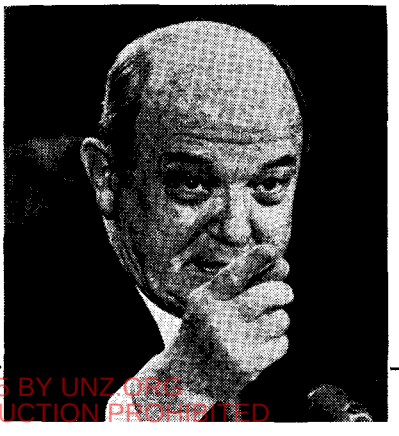
"Sometimes I cannot sleep at night," he said. "I think of that hamlet, and where I made grow a certain plant, where a certain tree grew in the garden, and how we set off early in the morning to the rice fields."

His wife weeps while her husband pretends not to notice. She wants her son back.

Le Van Phuoc says he does not know much about the war but he knows what concerns him—that he has lost a son and, like more than one-third of the Vietnamese in the South, he has been forced to leave his home.

He is not a foolish man who will tell everything in his heart to a foreigner. So he only says that the family house in Longtri village was a fine one. It was destroyed when American helicopters dropped rockets and napalm on the village.

"The wood columns of the house burned for seven days," he said, "and all we had left was a basket of nails." □



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The Effect on the Military

# THE DECLINE AND NEAR FALL OF THE U.S. ARMY

*By Seymour M. Hersh*

## The army was saved from "out-and-out ruin," says a prize-winning military reporter, only by the presidential decision to pull it out of Vietnam.

In the course of the first air war over North Vietnam in the mid-1960s, an anonymous U.S. Air Force general composed a little ditty about the extensive civilian control over target selection:

*"I am not allowed to run the train;*
*the whistle I can't blow.*
*I am not allowed to say how fast*
*the railroad trains can go.*
*I am not allowed to shoot off steam*
*nor even clang the bell.*
*But let it jump the goddam tracks*
*and see who catches hell."*

Well, they've all caught hell—the military who fought the war and the civilians who drew up the strategies and set the limits. A few scattered signs:

• Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird has made it clear that he considers his four-year term in the Pentagon to be politically damaging and has decided to leave the Nixon administration sometime before the 1973 inauguration.

• Former Army Chief of Staff William C. Westmoreland waited embarrassedly for an offer to join the Nixon administration after his term of office was completed last July. He even wrote the White House a letter offering his services. He heard nothing and retired to South Carolina to work on his golf game.

• Westmoreland's replacement, General Creighton W. Abrams, had to suffer through more than three months of congressional inquiry (into the unauthorized bombing of North Vietnam) before being confirmed by the Senate.

• During one eighteen-month period thirty-three of the best and the brightest army officers assigned to teach and train cadets at West Point resigned. Most of those who left were captains and majors with battlefield decorations from Vietnam and advanced degrees from first-rate universities. Their chances of becoming generals were high.

• West Point cadets, who are assured of free drinks from friendly bartenders during weekend leaves in the Washington area as long as they are in uniform, still come to the capital to visit—but no longer wear their uniforms.

These incidents and vignettes are but the tip of an iceberg—symptoms of the unprecedented decline in morality, integrity, prestige, and self-respect that has befallen the armed forces because of the war in Vietnam. This decline has been marked by excesses and deceits that have fed upon one another to the point where today they are virtually impossible to untangle as to cause and effect.

In the early 1960s, there were some generals—such as former Marine Corps commandant David M. Shoup—who vigorously objected to the concept of fighting a guerrilla war in Southeast Asia. Some young battlefield advisers also openly expressed their doubts to the few newspaper reporters then in Saigon. But General Shoup

CASH IN YOUR WAR BONDS
P.O.W.'S NEVER HAVE A NICE DAY
BACK THE BOYS IN VIETNAM
WAR IS GOOD BUSINESS
AMERICA LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT
EDUCATION NOT ESCALATION
SUPPORT OUR BOYS PAY MORE TAXES
NO AMNESTY

*Seymour M. Hersh won a Pulitzer Prize for uncovering the massacre at Mylai. A long-time writer on military affairs, he is currently an investigative reporter for the* New York Times *in Washington.*



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retired, and by the middle of the 1960s the young advisers had either resigned or become senior officers who had "joined the team" and had begun looking the other way.

Looking the other way became infectious. Concepts such as search and destroy, pacification, at-random harassment and interdiction fire, and body counts, if not devised, were at least approved and refined by civilian officials working in the White House, Pentagon, and State Department who incredibly never seemed to connect these concepts with the civilian casualties and chaos in Vietnam.

In the ground war, it all culminated in 1968 at Mylai, where American soldiers and officers slaughtered hundreds of Vietnamese civilians and the army refused to recognize what had happened. In the air war, there were the air raids beginning in late 1971 that were flown over North Vietnam in violation of Defense Department orders and then meticulously covered up.

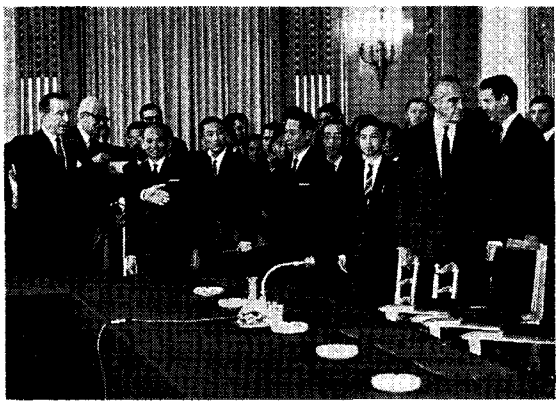
The most grievous casualty of the war has been the U.S. Army itself, which came close to out-and-out ruin in Vietnam in the aftermath of drugs, dissension, and the accumulated loss of self-respect. The army was saved from ruin only by a presidential decision—for political and practical reasons—to pull it out and begin the process of Vietnamization.

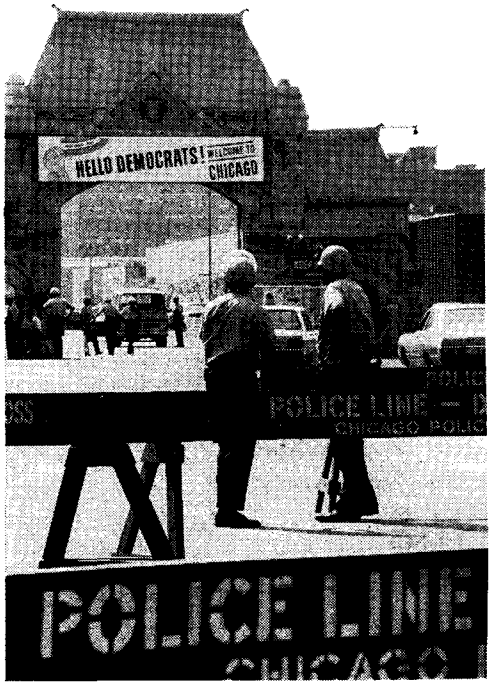
HEADQUARTERS SAIGON
We now have the initiative ...
The enemy offensive has been foiled ...
Besides, we knew about it in advance
©1967 HERBLOCK

"EVERYTHING'S OKAY—THEY NEVER REACHED THE MIMEOGRAPH MACHINE."
2/1/68

**"It became necessary to destroy the town to save it."**

**—A U. S. Army major, referring to the village of Bentre**



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The truly desperate conditions of the army by the end of its large-scale commitment in South Vietnam have never been adequately documented. But in mid-December 1970 one army psychiatrist wrote me a long, credible letter describing what was going on in his base in Vietnam, a facility along the South China Sea coast where GIs pulled out of combat were anxiously waiting for their twelve-month tour to end. The doctor asked that he not be identified and that his letter not be published, at least until his tour of duty was over. He is now out of the army, and here is a major part of his letter:

"The army seems on the verge of collapse. The command structure is rapidly losing control of the troops both in minor aspects and in some very tragic large ones. This collapse is taking place in three distinct and related facets—drugs, disregard for authority, and violence.

"Drug experimentation, abuse, and addiction have reached epidemic proportions . . . . There is . . . little or no effective interference with the network of Vietnamese drug suppliers. In this area, all compounds use Vietnamese maids who usually serve as eager sources of drugs. Deaths due to overdose are increasing in incidence.

"Disregard for authority runs the gamut from wearing whatever uniforms and decorations one pleases, to murdering your commanding officer or NCO [noncommissioned officer] if you don't like his attitude. In general, the NCOs and officers are easily and frequently intimidated by enlisted soldiers. I've been told by more than one NCO that you must not correct a soldier about his dress or behavior, etc., unless you are prepared to do physical combat with him. And because weapons of enormous destruction are easily obtained, these threats are too frequently followed through. The attitude over here is that to resolve a difference with someone is to merely 'blow him away' or 'frag him' (referring to a fragmentary grenade)."

The letter cited the following list of "fragging" incidents that took place in or near the writer's units during a two-month period:

Oct. 13—Orderly room and vehicles blown up by grenade (seven injured).

Oct. 19—Sergeant and captain "blown up by grenade."

Nov. 6 or 7—Captain "murdered with multiple stab wounds while asleep" in his quarters.

Dec. 3—Riot with some nonfatal stabbings.

Dec. 11—Grenade thrown in enlisted men's club, injuring eighteen GIs.

"These are only examples and in no way approach the true incidence of such occurrences," the officer wrote. His letter concluded:

"My concern is the army's policy of sweeping such events and trends under the carpet and unwillingness to make changes in its treatment of soldiers, recruitment policies, personnel managers, and in general its inertia as an unwieldly, unresponsive, irresponsible, and headless bureaucracy.

"It is indeed frightening and discouraging to see the army in such a shambles."

By the end of 1970 the shambles were everywhere. Companies were refusing to go on combat patrols. American door-gunners on combat helicopters were photographed kicking South Vietnamese soldiers off their airborne craft. Atrocities were still being committed and still being covered up or ignored. Black market scandals involving American military personnel were still commonplace.

By the end of the American ground involvement, it became clear that much of the slaughter could have been avoided if the military commanders—those men trained in duty and honor at West Point—had refused to tolerate needless abuse of Vietnamese civilians. If the two-star generals had insisted on courts-martial from 1965 on, the army might have responded. If a helicopter door-gunner knew that he could not wantonly fire at civilians without facing possible punishment, he might not have done so.

But the top commanders not only failed to stem the murder, they often joined in it. At least one army general was formally accused of "gook hunting"—purposeless gunning down of Vietnamese—during the war; many others are known to have done it. One brigade commander, a colonel, had a helicopter reserved for him during the early hours every night so he and a few cronies could go hunting.

One badly disillusioned young lieutenant colonel told me of the time, while on a special mission to Vietnam from the Pentagon, that he decided to look up a West Point classmate, who was then a battalion commander in the Mekong Delta. They arranged to meet at 3 p.m. on a Sunday afternoon in the operations center of the battalion. The combat officer was late, but at 3:30 his helicopter landed with the usual racket and, seconds later, the young infantry leader burst into the operations cen-

**"Mother, clap for joy over your children's corpses.**

**1968**



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ter, face flushed with excitement, ran to the cooler, grabbed a beer, took a big swig, and said, "Best hunt we ever had! Bagged three today."

Some military officers and Pentagon officials still insist today that it didn't happen that way in Vietnam. What they really mean is that they didn't see it or didn't want to hear about it.

For example, Robert McNamara straight-facedly told newsmen during a trip to South Vietnam in 1965 that he had been concerned about reports of civilian casualties from the heavy American bombing of South Vietnam but that he had asked many pilots about the reports and none of them knew anything about killing civilians. In earlier visits, as David Halberstam and other journalists have recorded, McNamara often traveled to a village or hamlet outpost where he would stop in front of a young American officer and ask—in the hearing of assorted generals—whether the youth had any complaints. The "no, sir" apparently satisfied him.

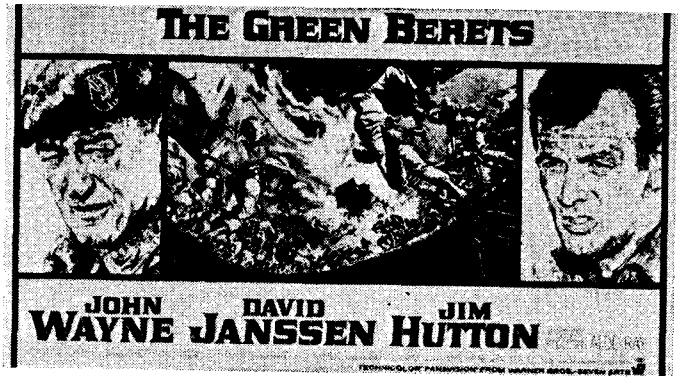
Most Americans, despite Mylai and similar disclosures, still can't understand how bad it was—both for the Vietnamese who were being killed and the Americans who were killing them.

Listen to Mike McCusker, who spent eight years in the marines, two of them in South Vietnam as a combat correspondent with the First Marine Division. His is but one of hundreds of similar accounts made public in the past few years. It is commonplace. He made the following statement during a "war-crimes" hearing in Washington in late 1970:

"In that position [as a combat correspondent] I saw damn near everything from command to the field. Perhaps an indication of that is an interview with the commanding general of the First Marine Division at the time, who said that Vietnamese society was ignorant and superstitious; the children were raised as thieves and liars; we could do nothing with the old; the children themselves should be taken from their families and indoctrinated all their lives in government camps.

"A colonel, in an interview with me, said his job was to kill gooks—except I knew better what to write and [would] put it a different way, such as country, God, duty, and devotion, helping these people, even though both of us knew it was a lie and not worth considering as far as the military was concerned. As a reporter, I could not write of these things, nor could I write of atrocities, nor could I write of the treatment of POWs; I could not write of women fighting with the VC, nor of women and children taken prisoner, nor of harassment and interdiction fire, or even napalm, which was referred to as incender-gel about halfway through my tour.

"My job essentially was to cover things up from the



**. . . Mothers, clap in cheer for peace."**

**From a song by Trinh Cong Son, South Vietnam's leading songwriter**

**1969**



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press, to be the PR [public relations] man, and come off with the Marine Corps looking like a shining knight on a white horse. If anything was coming up that would embarrass the Marine Corps, we were to take reporters someplace else and make sure that they didn't know about it. The general trend was to allude in our stories to all Vietnamese as Communists, not only dehumanizing them but indicting them as something that we are programed to fear and abhor. Every dead Vietnamese was counted as Vietcong, because they would not be dead if they were not Vietcong, whether they were ninety years old or six months old. The body count was any pool of blood, and I used to think perhaps multiplied by seven."

After General Westmoreland instituted the body count as an index to American victories in South Vietnam, GIs suddenly found themselves killing and counting chickens, goats, and other animals and reporting them as confirmed "VC." Some units dug up Buddhist burial mounds and counted the bodies. Not all units engaged in such tactics, of course, but many did.

During a speaking tour of college campuses in 1971 I discovered the quickest way to demonstrate not only the depth of the savagery in Vietnam but also the widespread knowledge of it among the military was to inquire at the outset if any of the students had formerly served as helicopter pilots or door-gunners. I would then single out at random one of those who responded and ask him to tell the audience about "the skids—you know, what you guys would do sometimes with the skids." Without fail, the ex-GI would explain that many helicopter units occasionally would attempt to run down and strike Vietnamese farmers or peasants with the craft's skids—a maneuver that took a lot of skill and one life.

The army, in some sense, was obviously out of control during much of the fighting in Vietnam, and this ultimately amounted to more than just a military matter; it concerned the principle of civilian control of the military. Why did not or could not civilian authorities keep the military in hand? There is a good deal of evidence that civilian officials in the Pentagon and elsewhere simply chose not to make an issue of some abuses, even though they knew about them. For instance, the idealistic young American military advisers who went to South Vietnam in the early 1960s to help the Vietnamese "fight Communism" and learned that government-supported village chiefs were robbing the American AID program blind were repeatedly told by civilian superiors not to make an issue of it, not to rock the boat. A young U.S. Embassy aide in Saigon who similarly discovered currency abuses and corruption involving senior American military officers and attempted to do something about them was considered a malcontent and troublemaker.

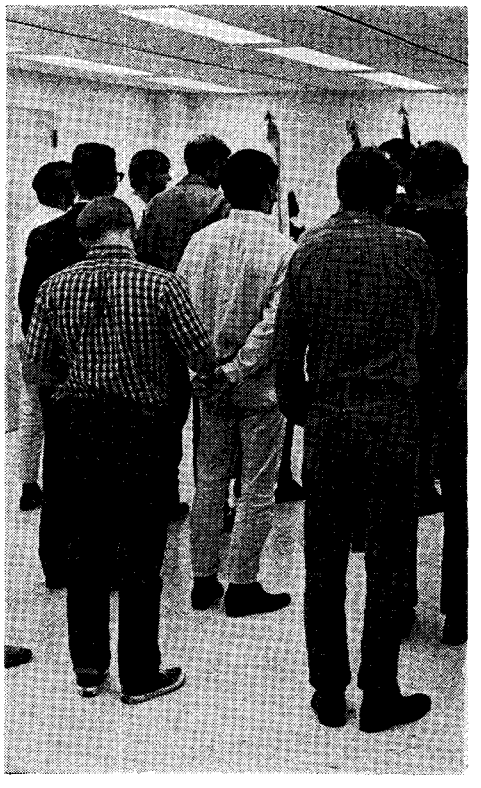
But there is also evidence that high civilian authorities were only dimly, if at all, aware of many of the signs of moral and disciplinary collapse in Vietnam. Some Defense Department officials in Washington were genuinely stunned by the revelations of atrocities at Mylai, for instance. A few have since told me that they had no idea such things went on.

Why not? One reason is that within the military hierarchy much information about the war was relayed only on an ad hoc, "need to know" basis, and, even then, often with reluctance. One young officer assigned to a Joint Chiefs of Staff position in 1966 recalls being taken to see a senior general shortly after arriving in his new post and being told that he was first and foremost an army man and secondarily a member of the Defense Department. Nothing, he was told, was to go upstairs to the third floor—where Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara then had his offices—without prior Joint Chiefs' approval.

Indications are that, in matters of grave strategic importance in Vietnam, civilian overseers of the military either did not know what the military was doing or, knowing, were unable or unwilling to prevent them from doing it. The most recent evidence came forth in Senate Armed Services Committee hearings this fall into the unauthorized air force bombing of North Vietnam.

Under rules laid down by the Defense Department after President Johnson decreed a halt to the bombing

**"We urge the President to renew the national commitment to full social justice and . . .**



**1969**



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of North Vietnam in 1968, no bombing was allowed except in retaliation for attacks on reconnaissance aircraft that routinely flew over North Vietnam. But according to Senate witnesses, the air force bombed North Vietnamese targets on more than twenty occasions between November 1971 and March 1972, under the guise of "protective reaction" strikes. The bombings were covered up by doctoring post-strike reports, witnesses said, a deception that took up to three hours each night and involved more than 200 officers and a number of noncommissioned officers.

Yet, two high ranking officers testified before the Senate committee that they could not guarantee that a similar violation of civilian command and control would not take place again. There was also explicit testimony from air force Gen. John D. Lavelle, who was demoted two ranks in connection with the unauthorized bombings, that he had been encouraged to violate the bombing restrictions by numerous high officials, including Defense Secretary Laird. Later in the hearings General Lavelle told of a top-secret meeting in Hawaii late last year in which his Seventh Air Force representatives were assured that the Joint Chiefs of Staff "would not question" the targets struck in "protective reaction" bombings and also would, "in the advent of adverse publicity," provide full backing.

This and similar testimony prompted Sen. Harold Hughes of Iowa to declare that "I believe that the record developed so far contains evidence of military disregard of explicit orders approved by civilian authorities and of a breakdown . . . in the control and monitoring system."

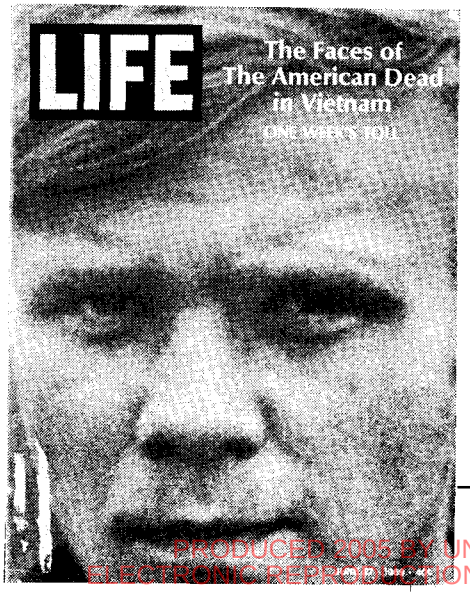
Faced with a Senate demand for a complete investigation of the incident, however, Defense Secretary Laird decided that what was really needed was more military inspectors general, those officers to whom complaints are theoretically to be directed but—as much of the GI antiwar testimony has shown—never are. Mr. Laird also told newsmen after the Senate hearings that the failure of either the White House or top military officers in Washington to detect the more than twenty unauthorized raids over North Vietnam was solely a military failure, and therefore did not represent a breakdown in, or a threat to, civilian control of the military.

For all the Senate's concern, moreover, it refused to take a stand on the immediate issue in the hearings—the promotion of Gen. Creighton W. Abrams to be Army Chief of Staff. General Abrams was the direct superior of Lavelle at the time the unauthorized raids were taking place and therefore, under all known military codes, was directly responsible. Yet the senators, feeling no pressure from constituents on the issue, voted to confirm Abrams's appointment by a vote of 84 to 2. The command-and-control question raised by the Lavelle affair will probably never be fully explored.

There are numerous other examples of inadequate command and control. For example, last year a House investigating subcommittee demanded that the Defense Department begin an investigation into vicious abuses of the Phoenix Program—designed by American advisers to "help root out the Vietcong infrastructure" by identifying and then "neutralizing" either through imprisonment, assassination, or forced defection those civilians believed, often erroneously, to be guerrillas. The Pentagon simply ignored Congress, despite urgings that "these charges should be either substantiated or repudiated after an im-

**. . . to be aware of increasing charges of repression."**

**The President's Commission on Campus Unrest**



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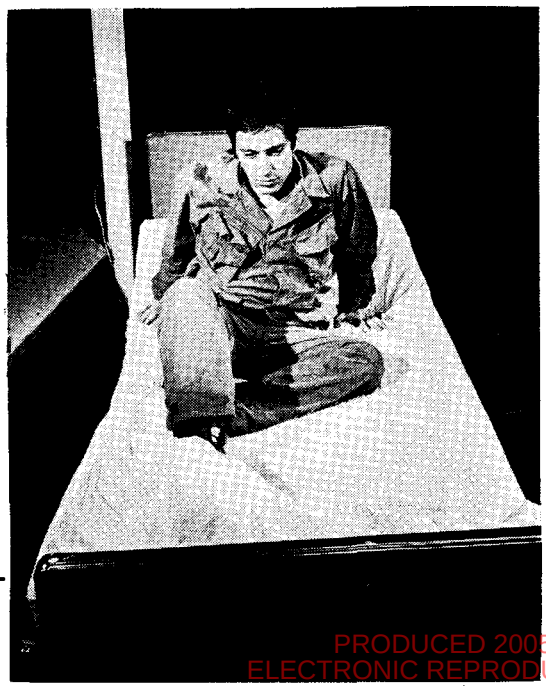
partial and thorough investigation." Today Congress evidently cannot even force the Pentagon to investigate itself.

The military has also ignored congressional instructions to restrain what has been called the "grade gallop"—the vast expansion in the services' high-level officer ranks that has taken place during the Vietnam War. A recent congressional report revealed that, although the services now have 900,000 fewer officers in uniform than at the end of World War II, there are about 5,000 more colonels, lieutenant colonels, navy captains, and commanders. In 1945 the United States had slightly more than 2,000 senior admirals and generals in uniform to lead more than twelve million personnel. As of mid-1971 the armed forces could count 1,330 such top-level officers for 2.7 million then in uniform. The army, with 130,000 fewer men today than it had in 1964, still has 2,800 more colonels, lieutenant colonels, and majors. Its forty-four three-star generals on active duty are more than were in the service at the end of World War II and also more than were serving in 1970, when the service had 300,000 more men. Thirteen per cent of the men in uniform today are officers, more than twice the ratio of twenty-seven years ago. The proportions amount to, in the words of Sen. William Proxmire of Wisconsin, "an outrageous situation."

* * * * *

There is no great mystery, finally, about the reason for the decline of military prestige and integrity that has taken place during the Vietnam War. Simply put, the armed forces have been waging a losing battle since the early 1960s and were never permitted to tell the truth about it. In recent years, no one—in the government or elsewhere—even wanted to hear the truth.

Thus, the bombing of North Vietnam was always said to be successful in cutting off the supply of enemy men and material to the South. Major ground engagements in the South always resulted in enemy defeats and slaughters. The light was always at the end of the tunnel. By the time a competent army officer rose to be colonel, he was supposed to be not only a sure-handed tactician but also an accomplished dissembler.

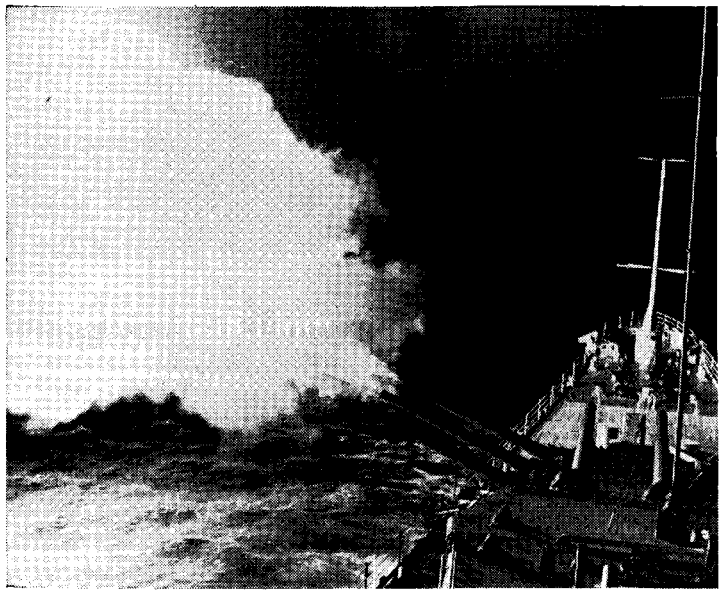


There is no evidence yet that the armed forces have begun attacking the real problem left over from Vietnam—the decline in military morality and integrity. In trying to pick up the pieces, the army has apparently decided that the quickest solution is the all-volunteer army. Aided by increased pay, lower man-power needs, no Vietnam combat duty, and soft-sell recruiting, the army may find itself manned completely by volunteers by late next year. But the dangers of an all-volunteer army are immense. Why is it that the first recent war in which the top ranks of the army were completely staffed by professional officers was such a debacle? In World War I and World War II and Korea there were mobilizations that brought in thousands of top army officers from outside to take over battalions, brigades, and headquarters. In Vietnam, however, the war was led by the World War II and postwar graduating classes of West Point and The Citadel. And it was these senior officers who remained so silent throughout the war and who praise it still.

Much of the bad news—that is, much of the truth—

**"In this administration, we are Vietnamizing the search for peace."**

**—Richard Nixon, November 3, 1969**



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about Vietnam came from the "grunts", the GI draftees, who saw and told. But they will not be in the new all-professional army.

The army is bound to improve after Vietnam—any change can only be for the better. Already its top leadership has ordered twenty-five senior generals to retire and has promoted a two-star general over scores of his superiors to serve as Vice Chief of Staff. But any significant improvement cannot take place in a vacuum—with no one demanding answers to the questions and doubts left by the military performance in Vietnam.

Thus, barely a ripple was caused by a report last June that the army's own investigation into the Mylai incident had concluded that the top two generals involved were responsible for no less than forty-three acts of omission or commission. Similarly, no cries for investigation were raised by a news magazine's report a few months later that one long-term army pacification program in the Mekong Delta may have led to 5,000 or more civilian deaths. Even the navy bombing of the French Ministry in Hanoi during the Paris peace talks last month failed to provoke much protest.

If there is a lesson in Vietnam, the armed forces seem to have learned it—they delay investigations, ignore issues of morality and public responsibility, and assume the citizenry doesn't care about the truth or won't insist on it.

Vietnam has brought on a frightening public-be-damned attitude on the part of the military bureaucracy—and the public deserves it. □

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The Effect on the Veterans

# THE "GOOK SYNDROME" AND "NUMBED WARFARE"

*By Robert Jay Lifton*

**The psychological problems of returning combat veterans could pose a serious threat to this society, says a leading psychiatrist. But even more ominous are the potential effects of "numbed warfare."**

Psychologically speaking, there are two ways to kill in war. There is the classical way of reducing one's victims to nonhuman status—to "Huns," or "Communists," or "Gooks," or simply "Enemy"—so that one is merely getting rid of beasts, devils, scum, or threatening obstacles. And there is the more recent method of technological distancing—of being so far removed from one's victim that, psychologically, he does not exist at all. One is merely tending one's machine.

Both ways of killing have been widely practiced by Americans in Vietnam over the past decade, and both have disturbing psychological consequences. During the past two years I have been investigating these consequences—through individual interviews with Vietnam veterans, participation in a "rap-group" program with members of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War and other professional colleagues, and talking with a great number of other firsthand observers of the war (I have made two personal visits to Vietnam myself).

* * * * *

The men who fought the long Vietnam ground war were drawn into what I shall call the "gook syndrome." The scapegoated victims of American soldier-survivors of the ground war in Vietnam were not the North Vietnamese or the NLF guerrillas, or even South Vietnamese civilians and soldiers. Rather, they were the "gooks." The word "gook" originated during World War II and came into active use again in the Korean War. It refers most commonly to a brown-skinned or Oriental non-Christian. Linguistically, the origins of the word are unclear (it may come from the Scottish *gowk* [simpleton] or the Middle English *gowke* [*cuckoo*]), but there is no doubt that in common slang it is used to connote sludge, dirt, or slime—polluted liquid filth. Such a dehumanizing term has always been necessary to numb soldiers for widespread killing. It serves to mark the intended victims with a "death taint" (a readiness for slaughter), which contrasts with the immortalizing grandeur of a soldier's own group. But "gook" goes unusually far in imposing that death taint by implying that human beings are inert liquid slime. The consequences have been grotesque, not only for Vietnamese victims, but also for American GIs. Both victims and victimizers have been caught in the "psychic slime" of the gook syndrome.

For instance, in the field the syndrome led to a morbid competition in the body count. As one veteran who witnessed Mylai explained, "[The soldier boasting of a high body count] was sort of saying . . . 'I hate the gooks—in terms that you can actually understand. I hate them a whole lot . . . even more than a whole lot . . . so, wow! I killed one hundred twenty-one of them.' . . . The only way you could determine who hated gooks the most was by how many times you beat them or killed them or raped them or something like that."

Avoiding the gook syndrome while in Vietnam was almost impossible, as one former infantry sergeant made clear in telling of his own conflicts about opposing it: "I really felt sick at myself for not . . . confronting [my men] . . . . And yet [I knew] . . . it wouldn't make any

*Robert Jay Lifton is a professor of psychiatry at Yale University and author of* Death in Life: The Survivors of Hiroshima. *The material in this article is adapted from his forthcoming book, which he says concerns "the psychological effects of the war on Vietnam veterans and the veterans' transformation away from the warrior ethos." The book is to be published next spring by Simon & Schuster.*



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erence. I could . . . punish [my troops] when I caught m [calling the Vietnamese gooks or brutalizing them], l yet the whole military establishment was contrary to at I was doing. . . . The colonels called them gooks, captain called them gooks, the staff all called them ks . . . . [The men] took their cue from that, and they sidered me some kind of weird freak."

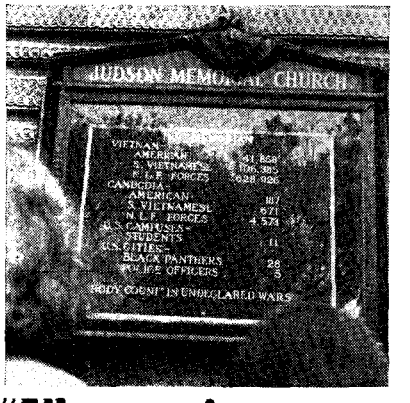
o predominent was the gook syndrome that trying to id it made one "abnormal," and even those who con-usly fought its dehumanization were inevitably wn into it. "The ARVNS were famous for stealing any-ıg they could get their hands on. . . . But, like . . . n an ARVN would come over looking for me or some-g, and one of the Americans would toss him over the ped-wire fence in a heap, you know . . . I just didn't ıt to deal with it," explained the same infantry ser-ıt. ". . . It didn't matter whether I reported it because one cared]. They were ARVNS; they were subhuman. What could I do? I couldn't deal with . . . that level eing human to them [all the time] because I would e gone insane. So I just had to . . . sort of find a dead e and put it all there."

aintaining that "dead space," creating that psychic ıbing, meant, of course, ceasing to feel the humanity he Vietnamese. And, at some level, it also meant ıding in their victimization. Attempting to break out ıe gook syndrome, to form genuine friendships with namese, could end bitterly for everyone, as the ser-geant learned in the course of a close and caring friend-ship with a middle-aged Vietnamese woman and her daughter. He spoke of how "one morning they came in and said, '*Mama-san* is gone. The VC got her last night because she associated with the Americans.' . . . I found myself thinking, why the hell don't I just leave well enough alone . . . just function as a military idiot and [not get] into trouble. . . . Why try to make these people . . . see that Americans are good? . . . They're caught in the middle, and [you're] helping them get caught in the middle . . . . They're just going to get crushed . . . . It's better to leave them alone."

The gook syndrome, then, became an essential part of the collective psychological adaptation of Americans to the inverse moral universe of Vietnam. To rebel against it was to risk severe psychic or physical repercussions and possibly to endanger one's own life and the lives of others. As one man summed up the situation during a rap group, "Every time you'd start to feel human, you'd get screwed."

Despite everything, however, more humane feelings toward Vietnamese did persist. Such feelings could be kept alive by involvements with families or by various encounters with the suffering of individual Vietnamese. Children could play a particularly great part in resensitizing experiences. Veterans recalled their shock at seeing American trucks barreling through villages and running over children in the road. These are what I call images of ultimate transgression, of ultimate "mismatch"—the helpless young, whom adults are supposed to nurture and protect, cruelly destroyed by all-powerful but totally unfeeling American machines.

The extraordinary duality of the soldiers' feelings toward Vietnamese children was epitomized in all its absurdity at Mylai. Describing a scene right after the slaughter, one veteran spoke of a few small Vietnamese children still left running about. The same men who had just done the shooting "were giving the kids food—you




**"All your private property is Target for your enemy And your enemy is We." — Jefferson Airplane, from "We Can Be Together"**

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know, just like nothing ever happened. I could connect the kids with the people in the village," he went on. "I could even . . . actually wonder . . . if it was [this kid's] mother and father . . . his sister or brother that were killed in the village. And I don't think it ever—well, maybe it did—[but] I don't think it ever popped into anybody else's mind."

For some, sexual encounters could contribute to overcoming the gook syndrome. One veteran, for example, told of his efforts to build mutually sensitive and considerate relationships with several Vietnamese women only to find that exploitative elements, deceptions, and shame were inescapable. Drawn to the women but feeling no possibility of a valid, human tie, he eventually solved the dilemma by frequenting massage parlors. There he found that the relationships had at least a certain simplicity and integrity: "I'd pay my money, and I'd get the steam bath, the massage, the sex, and that would be it. And what happened was open. The kind of exchange it was—was *that* exchange—and it was called what it was, and there [was] something very refreshing about it. . . . It began to seem to me as if that was the only kind of sex I could have in Vietnam . . . [and as if that] was the only honest thing I did [while I was there]."

This veteran's "solution"—open, unvarnished sex, unencumbered by any other kind of relationship or commitment—was neither original nor ideal. Nor did it fully exculpate him, either objectively or in his own eyes, from the sense of sexual exploitation. But it did have a significant psychological value for him. It enabled him to preserve, through sex, an island of sensitivity that contributed to his responsiveness to Vietnamese suffering. It played a part in his capacity to look out from his Saigon rooftop at the random American artillery fire exploding on the outskirts of the city and express to a friend his rage and his awareness that "there are *people* out there." The cry was impotent, just as the sex was tainted and incomplete. Yet the very struggle to relate his erotic impulses to human concerns gave him something of fundamental importance to build upon in dealing with the emerging residue of his gook syndrome later on.

Whether or not they struggle to rid themselves of the gook syndrome—in effect, to "rehumanize" themselves—most returning veterans do not have such a reservoir of encounters, realizations, and feelings toward the Vietnamese to draw upon. In rap groups men could chuckle together in recalling such things as a sign in a small Vietnamese outpost, "Car Wash and Get Screwed," but they were uneasy about the mixture of exploitation, nostalgia, and absurdity involved in the recollection. Their sense of absurdity, mockery, and self-mockery, however, was crucial in the struggles of these antiwar veterans to

**1970**

**"If, when the chips are down, the world's most powerful nation, the United States of America, acts like a pitiful, helpless giant, the forces of totalitarianism and anarchy will threaten free nations and free institutions throughout the world."**

**—Richard Nixon, on the eve of the Cambodian incursion**

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develop an energizing or animating relationship to the guilt associated with the denial of Vietnamese humanity —to the guilt buried beneath the word "gook" in some "dead space" of psychic numbness.

Sometimes a seemingly unremarkable memory could reflect many levels of abuse tied to the gook syndrome. One man spoke with a curiously gentle bitterness of "the atrocity that was there in daily life. . . . [American vehicles] going through the village at forty miles an hour, kicking up a cloud of dust when the *mama-san* just got through sweeping off the front porch." Compared with other American transgressions, this one seems very innocuous, but the image persisted for the storyteller because it symbolized the abuse of weak and helpless Vietnamese by blindly rampaging and numbed American power and technology—a brutal intrusion that destroyed orderly existence and spread only filth. The image might also have been a "screen memory"—a memory that is a mild substitution for, but still representative of, a much more painful event that can neither be consciously faced nor completely dispelled from the unconscious mind.

Significantly, the "rehumanizing" process among veterans in rap groups seemed considerably easier in relationship to former "enemies." Much was made of the fact that the NLF and North Vietnamese—as opposed to the South Vietnamese—were "fighting for something." Attitudes concerning the NLF and North Vietnamese often reflected respect for them as courageous and determined fighters, as men who "had a lot of balls." By becoming national revolutionaries, whether through joining the North or the NLF, men and women ceased to qualify as "death-tainted gooks."

Since, in a fundamental way, the Vietnam War epitomizes a worldwide struggle (mostly on the part of nonwhite peoples) against victimization, antiwar veterans, by however circuitous a route, thus become part of a significant late-twentieth-century pattern of "defections" from the ranks of former victimizers in favor of some form of struggle *against* victimization. The antiwar veterans may also make direct psychological contact with the American version of the Third World psychological struggle: the rejection of victimization here, first by blacks, and then by other groups abused by this society.

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Among the vast majority of returning GIs, however, the gook syndrome is not even confronted. It continues to serve the defensive psychological functions of justifying the killing in Vietnam and of avoiding confrontation with guilt. Such is the case with hawkish veterans who continue to insist, "We should have killed all the gooks." For such men the gook syndrome may simply be transferred to other groups when these men come into contact with the vast reservoir of victimizing imagery available in American society. Clearly, there is a parallel between a "gook" syndrome and a "nigger" syndrome. Today there may be hundreds of thousands of Vietnam veterans who, unable to find viable modes of human reconnection, are at least tempted to seek that reconnection by creating new—or re-creating old—victims. In this and many other ways the Vietnam War could do a great deal more than it already has to tear America apart.

* * * * *

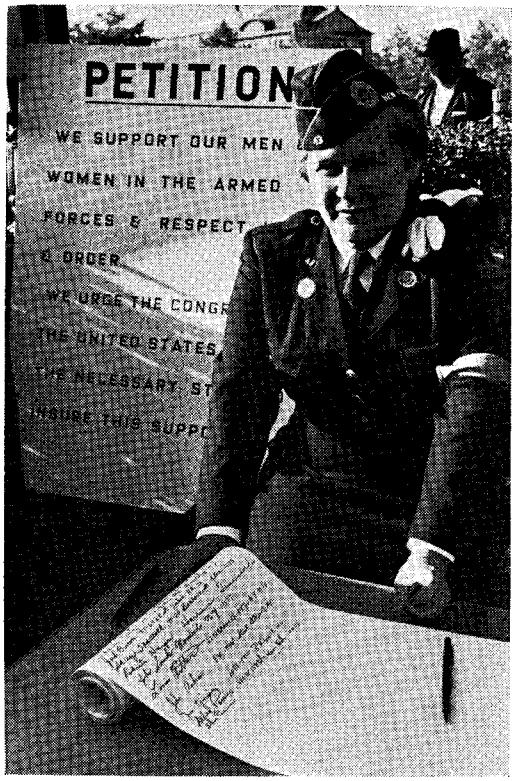
Even more grave consequences may emerge from the shift in Vietnam away from the filth of counterinsurgency warfare on the ground to "clean" forms of technological warfare conducted mostly from the air or by means of highly automated air-and-ground combinations. The aim of this technological, or "numbed," warfare has been well stated by one observer as "replacing men who won't fight with machines that will." And while this possibility is undoubtedly considered fortunate by American military authorities, it must be viewed as ominous for mankind.

Valuable accounts of technological warfare have been provided by Fred Branfman, a former refugee worker in Laos who now heads Project Air War, a Washington anti-war group. Branfman spent four years in Laos and interviewed both American pilots and Laotian victims of U. S. air raids. In his book *Voices From the Plain of Jars: Life Under an Air War* and in a series of articles, Branfman says that, "if . . . Mylai was the symbol of American ground intervention [and of face-to-face slaughter] during the 1960s, the Plain [of Jars] is the symbol of the automated war of the 1970s." On the Plain of Jars, where fifty thousand people formerly thrived, the result of heavy American bombing was, according to Branfman, that "an entire society [was] wiped off the face of the earth and no one in [America even] knew about it."

Numbed warfare is conducted within a self-enclosed system. The fighter's only psychological contacts are with military superiors or peers and with his equipment. Lacking any relationship with his victims, the numbed warrior receives from them very little of the "feedback" that could permit at least one layer of his mind to perceive those victims as humans. He does not, therefore, require a dehumanizing "gook syndrome" since, psychologically speaking, no one is there to be rendered into a "gook."

Those who bomb need not feel the searing inner conflicts of the former ground troops. With their targets in Laos, for example, chosen for them by the American ambassador or the CIA, and with their victims beyond the range of the eye, the bombers have strictly a technical job. "Look, we're just bus drivers" was the way one pilot explained himself to Branfman. "Men are freed from the hatred, doubts, greed or rationalizations that killing usually entails," Branfman concludes. "Conscience and morality are irrelevant. One does not set out to kill and therefore, psychologically, one does not."

The essence of numbed warfare, then, is the near total separation of the act of killing from the *idea* of killing. As such, numbed warfare is perhaps the most malignant expression of the broad cultural gap between our technology and our feelings. One might assume, as Branfman does, that "the issue of guilt becomes meaningless." But I believe it is more accurate to say that numbed warfare makes guilt more readily avoidable. To call forth guilt,



**"There have been Mylais in every war Now for the first time in history we have tried a soldier for performing his duty."**

**—Herbert Rainwater, National Commander of the VFW**

**1970**



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to deal with it and animate one's relationship to it, requires a concerted effort at reconnecting the act and idea of killing.

A significant minority of Vietnam veterans have made precisely that effort. A former Marine Corps pilot, Jon Floyd, described his experience in the air war at the Winter Soldier Investigation of early 1971, the first and largest public inquiry into war crimes sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. As a pilot, said Floyd, "you see flak at night. That's about as close to war as [you] get . . . . You go out, fly your mission, you come back to your air-conditioned hootch and drink beer or whatever. . . . You don't realize at the time, I don't think, what you're doing. It dawned on me, I think, when we got reports of thirteen-year-old NVA soldiers coming across and being captured . . . that most probably [young girls were driving] most of these trucks that we were destroying up north."

The impersonal war that protects participants from guilt can become personal with the breakthrough of images of one's victims as sympathetic human beings—in Floyd's case images of them as dedicated young women and thirteen-year-old boys. But such psychic breakthroughs are all too rare, for the technological warrior's strongest psychic connections are not to the object of the technological war—the human enemy—but to the *process* of the war, to a set of self-enclosed imperatives in which the human enemy need never figure in any active sense. Psychological guilt and conflict are blocked out in part by the pilot's preoccupation with technical skill and performance. "When you go down in Laos, you don't face a very bright future," one air force officer explained. "So you need motivation to bomb a place like Laos—this turns out to be mainly professional pride . . . . You become a part of the machine as you really do it. Guys who fly keep their professionality. That's why, as we phase down here, the air force will want to bomb . . . . I haven't bombed now for three months, and I really feel out of shape. The key is to be able to bomb without really thinking about it, automatically, to take evasive action . . . instinctively . . . . To be able to do this, you have to be flying every day."

In addition to a "professional imperative," there is also what Ralph Lapp, the atomic scientist and writer, has called the "technological imperative"—the strongly felt impulse to make active use of any technology that is available. The systematic destruction of Laotian villages on the Plain of Jars, as Branfman points out, dates from the November 1968 bombing halt over North Vietnam. There was no special activity of Pathet Lao forces or any other strategic reason for a bombing escalation, but Branfman reports the American ambassador to Laos as having said, "You gotta understand, Fred—we had all those planes coming into Laos. What could we do? We had to bomb villages."

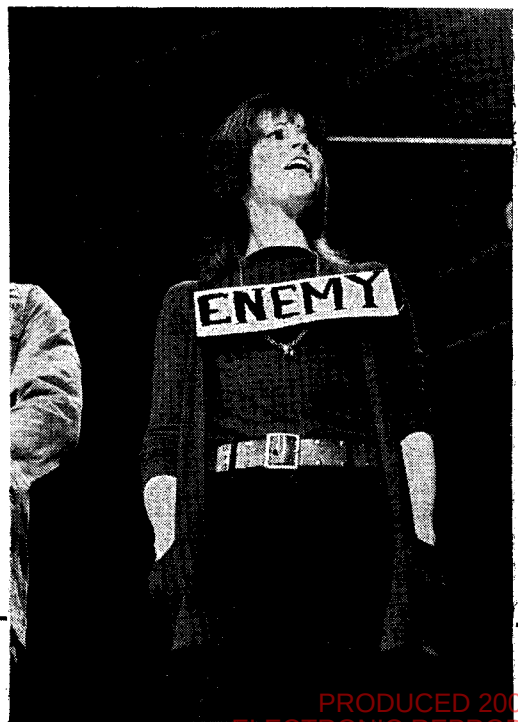
One begins to understand the ease and extent of psychic numbing induced in such technological warfare when one contrasts the desensitized pronouncements of technological warriors in Laos with the descriptions of the air war given by refugees from the bombing. An American USAID official in Vientiane told Branfman, "Sure, some of the villages get bombed; there's no other way to fight a war out here, for God's sake . . . . All refugees talk about the bombing. They don't like [it]. But even if you found an example in which it was proven conclusively that houses were bombed, so what?" But a Laotian refugee-survivor, putting the matter differently, reminds us of what really happens to people under the bombs: "This village woman was a person of good character . . . . Why did she have to die so pitifully? She died in the middle of the forest beside the cow she tended . . . in misfortune with unsurpassed sadness . . . . The airplanes truly killed the people at a time when we knew nothing about what was going on. They came to do this, why? When you see this, how do you feel about your own brothers and sisters and relatives? Would you not be angry and concerned? Compare our hearts to yours. And what are we to do?"

The ultimate removal of psychic connections between the victimizer and the victimized is, of course, promised by the "automated battlefield." While as yet far from perfected, the automated battlefield has enormous significance for the changing psychology of war. The intent is to create an all-embracing system of electronic circuitry, which, in the words of one observer, will render the area of fighting "a manless, foolproof, giant lethal pinball machine, out of which no living thing could ever escape." On the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos, for instance, there has been a project known as "Igloo White," in which acoustic and seismic sensors—devices highly sensitive to

**Viet-Nam**

*Proud people whose ravished children*
*Speak the beggar's tongue,*
*Whose girls whore the invader,*
*Whose men salute the rapist,*
*At night, hunt the rabid beast . . . .*

--Robert C. Hahn, in "Winning Hearts and Minds: War Poems by Vietnam Veterans"

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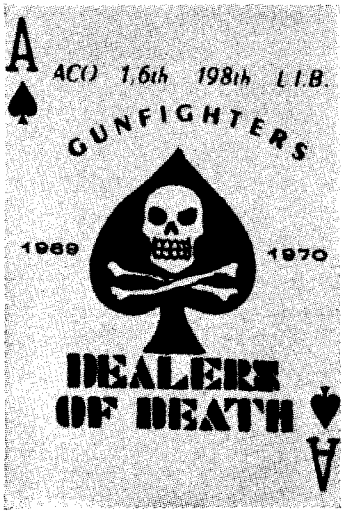
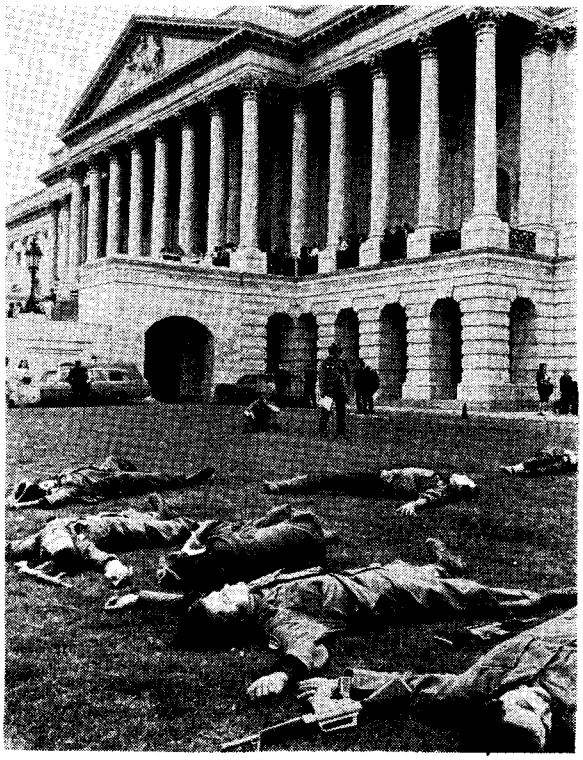
sound and vibrations—have been placed in long spears that have been flung from high-speed aircraft and stuck into the ground in series. Radio-connected microphones, dropped near the spears by parachute, record information from the sensors and transmit it to a surveillance plane flying in the area, which in turn relays the signals to a ground-control station. After being fed into a computer, the information is evaluated by "skilled target analysts," who decide whether it suggests enemy forces, friendly troops, trucks, animals, or whatever. If the decision is enemy troops, an air strike is set in motion. "War has gone electronic. Laos has been bugged" is one commentator's sardonic summary of the arrangement. The only awareness of "the enemy" comes from electronic "blips" on a screen. Again there is little need for the gook syndrome, since that syndrome requires the "psychological work" of turning a human enemy into a human victim. Here, from the beginning, the enemy is nothing but "blips," and, in the words of the same commentator, "A blip is worse than a gook."

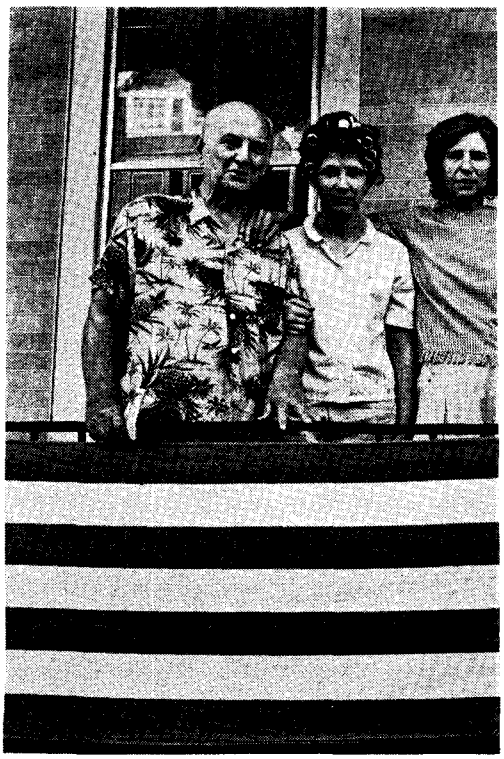
Electronic war not only suggests the elimination, as completely as possible, of the human element of war (and even of a distinguishable battlefield); it also suggests that man's psychological relationship to war—the numbing process itself—will be automated. As Paul Dickson and John Rothchild have written in the *Washington Monthly*: "The Lieutenant Calleys of war will be left home—if a drone helicopter is ordered by a computer to strike at a sensor post being passed by children and water buffaloes, it means there has been *an error in information, not in law or conscience*—a court martial cannot try a manless helicopter, nor can a chain of command be easily recognized in a more modern form of organization where only machines can be held responsible for their own actions."

Such an event would certainly be slaughter, but it could not be called an "atrocity." It would not even be referred to as a "false alarm," since, as a military spokesman made clear when testifying at Senate committee hearings on the automated battlefields, that phrase "has been stricken from the vocabulary." Rather, the incident would be "a nontargetable activation." There would be no blood or death for anybody—except the people caught or "picked up by" the circuitry. With warriors (like everyone else) watching their war on television, whatever lingering sense of cause and effect in war remains, whatever connection between victimizer and victim still exists, will disappear.

"Nobody," as Dixon and Rothchild point out, "will be able to tell what or who has been killed, or why the computer ordered the bombs dropped . . . ." We will arrive at an ultimate expression of what the Japanese scholar Maruyama Masao, in his extensive studies of Japan's World War II involvement, first called "the system of non-responsibility." Yet for many of our military planners this is the "vision" of the future. Consider what strikes me as a military man's macabre version of Martin Luther King's "I have a dream": "I see battlefields or combat areas that are under 24-hour real or near-real . . . surveillance of all types. I see battlefields on which we can destroy anything we can locate through instant communications and the almost instantaneous application of highly lethal fire power . . . . Hundreds of years were required to achieve the mobility of the armored division. A little over two decades later we had the airmobile division. With cooperative effort, no more than 10 years should separate us from the Automated Battlefield." The most important difference between this "dream" of Gen. William C. Westmoreland, the man most closely identified with the American military effort in Vietnam, and that of Martin Luther King is that Westmoreland's is more realistic and closer to realization. □





**1971**



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The Moral Consequences

# SLUM LANDLORDS IN EDEN

*By Francine du Plessix Gray*

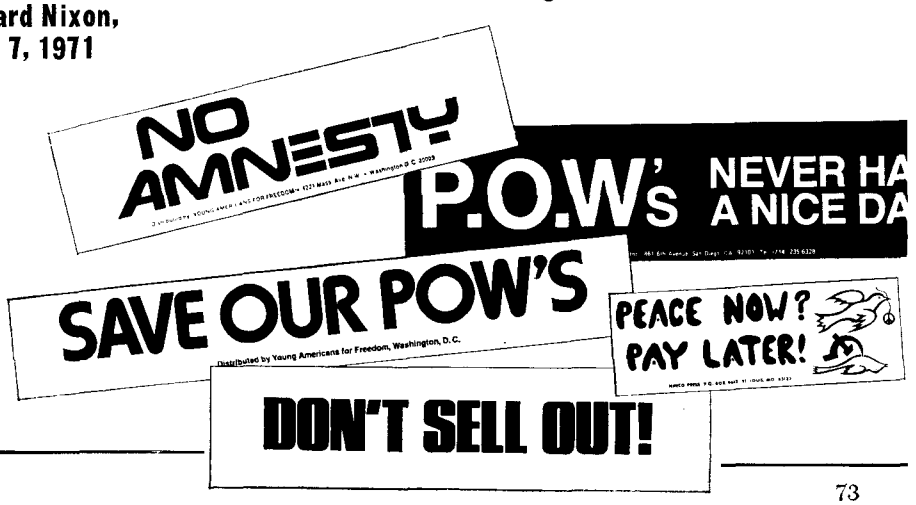
"While the minority floundered in self-flagellation," writes the author, "the majority clutched more fiercely than ever to its old myths of American innocence and Edenic perfection."

Shall we ever forget it, the beauty of that pageant? A half-million of us converging on the nation's capital in November of 1969, the largest assemblage of protesters in the nation's history. We wound down Pennsylvania Avenue with all the trappings of a medieval procession, our twelve-foot-wide banners resembling those of a religious feast. Even our singing had a liturgical tone: "All We Are Saying/Is Give Peace a Chance," a stark refrain, sung on five notes as closely spaced as those of a Gregorian chant, repeated with the hypnotic monotony of a rosary. The mall was alive with brotherhood and confidence on that autumn day of the New Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam. The omega signs of the war resisters, the black flags of the anarchists, the stars and stripes of the Veterans for Peace bobbed alongside the Rabelaisian collegiate slogans, "Dick Nixon Before He Dicks You," "Pull Out, Nixon, The Way Your Father Should Have." Over the loudspeaker David Dellinger was telling us for the twentieth time that year that we could close down the country overnight. There was a self-congratulatory ecstasy in these great expiatory rites of the 1960s, at which we confessed the guilts of our society, which often made us forget that there was another America.

When I returned to my corner of Connecticut, an area still steeped in the rigid conservatism of New England mill towns, three incidents occurred that clarified for me the longings of that other America. The first took place one night when a group of us vigiled on a public green to read the names of the 40,000 Americans who had died in Southeast Asia; several times during the night the electric cable to our loudspeaker was cut by citizens outraged by our lack of patriotism. The second occurred in a neighboring church, where "My country, 'tis of thee" is frequently sung during communion; the parishioners denied an antiwar priest any further pastoral duties because he had prayed for the North Vietnamese dead—as well as the American dead—during the celebration of the Mass. Shortly thereafter, in the same Connecticut county, citizens from eighteen adjoining towns planted "trees for peace" on their village greens and briefly stood in silence, their heads bowed, to honor an antiwar moratorium; within a fortnight sixteen of those trees had been uprooted by Americans who felt that to assert life in this way was subversive. As these incidents followed each other, the message of the counterdemonstrators came to me with increasing clarity: Don't criticize the perfect society; don't speak to us of our sins. Our confessions of war guilt were a blasphemy to the other America, a trampling on myths of innocence and moral perfection deep-seated in the American psyche. The division between the two Americas struck me not so much as political but as cosmological, ethical, religious—as were also most reasons, I believe, for our long presence in Vietnam.

*Francine du Plessix Gray is a staff writer for* The New Yorker. *She is author of* Divine Disobedience: Profiles in Catholic Radicalism *and* Hawaii: The Sugar-Coated Fortress.

**"Every time I talk to the brave wife of an American POW . . . , I become more deeply committed to end this war."**
**—Richard Nixon, April 7, 1971**



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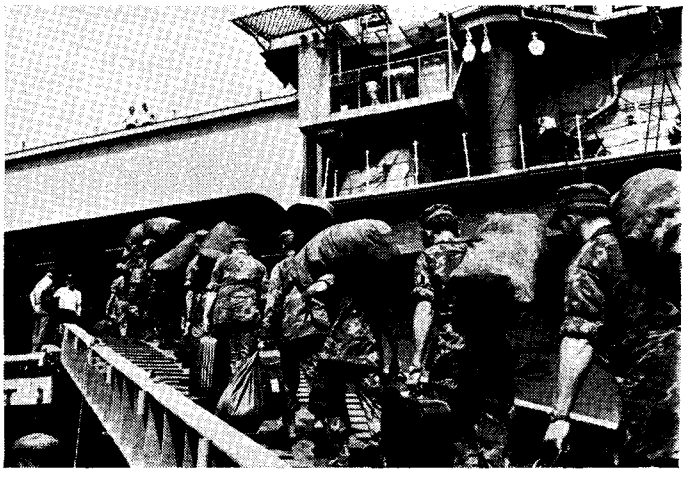
Unlike the Revolution, the Civil War, and our other military conflicts, Vietnam has been ultimately impervious to classical economic and political analysis. This third great crisis of our history has never lent itself readily to materialistic interpretations. Marxists have flailed around, speculating on our lust for Vietnam's deposits of exotic minerals or offshore oil, but the more honest of them have admitted failure. As for the Cold War rationale for our presence in Vietnam as late as 1972, that became obscure after our détente with the Communist powers made the policy of containment virtually irrelevant. So I am increasingly driven to see Vietnam as a tragedy forged by a kind of mythological determinism, by messianic ideals that are at the bedrock of the American psyche, ideals that are uniquely dangerous because their historical origins are of a religious nature. And hence fanatical. For America is the first country ever founded by people who were confident that they were saints, who attempted to re-create a pre-Fall Eden, who saw themselves as exempt from the sins of history.

In its origins our myth of Eden was as necessary as it was beautiful. It was the only solace of men undergoing the rude process of implantation in the wilderness, a people small in number, beset by dangers, and in constant terror. Their ecstatic infatuation with rebirth led them to believe that Americans were the "sifted grain" chosen by God to make His work perfect and that an American Adam could thrive free from the sins of the historical Adam. As the colonists founded their first towns, calling them *New* Haven, *New* Canaan, *New* Bedford, their preachers nourished them with visions of America as the new Paradise, the Eden unsullied by the depravity of old Europe. In the words of the Boston Puritan John Cotton, our first settlers had been reoffered "the grand charter given to Adam and his posterity in Paradise." Some have called this wishful erasure of historic time, this obsession with a restored innocence, our doctrine of exceptionalism.

Our myth of Adamic innocence forges that streak of optimism and self-idolatry that is at one pole of the American conscience. It is the watchdog of our national pride, ever ready to spring, at moments of crisis such as Vietnam, upon critics who perceive the sins of the Edenic community. But it is contradicted by an equally fundamental trait—the pessimism that flows from our founders' somber Calvinist view of man. This perfect society, elected by God to redeem the world, is to be built by men who are so debased by original sin as to be hopelessly imperfectible. In Jonathan Edwards's words, we are "loathsome insects" who are "Useful in Their Destruction Only," ready to grovel in "The Eternity of Hell's Torments." Yet Edwards's pessimistic wrath is constantly laced with the optimistic elitism of America's redemptive, messianic role: "The prelude of that glorious work of God which shall renew the work of mankind will begin in America." Depraved man versus perfect community. How can the debased creature build "the city on the hill"? The town fathers of seventeenth-century Salem gave us the first answer: only by the violence of purification. To create the innocence of the new Eden, the new Adam must clear the land of the infidel as brutally as he clears his mind of history.

If we tend to overlook the ambivalence of innocence and violence in the American character, it is because we forget that we are as millennialist as we are utopian. Utopians are traditionally rational, optimistic, and pacifist; they hold that men's ills will be cured by the establishment of fastidiously planned societies. Millennialists, on the other hand, are irrational and apocalyptic; they see themselves as divinely ordained elites set above the rest of mankind to save the world; if they often resort to violence, it is because purgative upheavals tend to concur with a search for the impossible purity of an earthly kingdom. The utopian and millennial traditions run like intertwining streams through our history, converging in our moral zealotry and cult of innocence. But it is the millennial, not the utopian, current that has molded our elitism, our antiintellectualism, and that has inspired the acts of violence accompanying our quest for the pure community: the burning of alleged witches and dissident sectarians, the decimation of the Indian heathen, the purges by Joseph McCarthy. In retrospect, few conflicts in recent times seem more millennial in pattern than our intervention in Vietnam. With that irreverence for history that characterizes all communities bent on

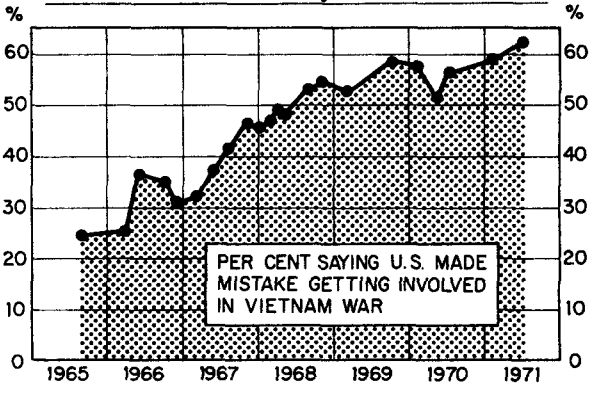


**1971**

**The Gallup Poll**

## Disillusionment with Vietnam War Reaches All-Time High

### 61 Per Cent Now Say War a Mistake




Over the last five and one-half years, public opinion on the Vietnam war has undergone dramatic change. In Aug., 1965, only 24 per cent of Americans believed U.S. involvement in Vietnam to be a mistake. Today, the figure has reached a record 61 per cent.



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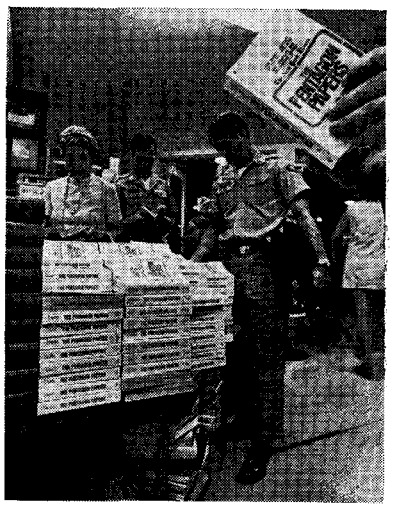
perpetual purity, we purged our State Department a generation ago of its best Far Eastern specialists and were driven into Vietnam by the myth that we were the chosen people who would save the world from the forces of monolithic Communism. Once this Armageddon world view was altered, we attempted to vindicate our innocence (we are guiltless, our men have not died in vain) by the perpetuation of a ceremony of blood: "The love of pure appearances is something to exult in," D.H. Lawrence wrote about us, "All Americans give in to it. Look pure . . . . The deliberate consciousness of Americans so fair and smooth-spoken, and the under-consciousness so devilish. Destroy! Destroy! Destroy! hums the under-consciousness. Love and produce! Love and produce! Love and produce! cackles the upper-consciousness."

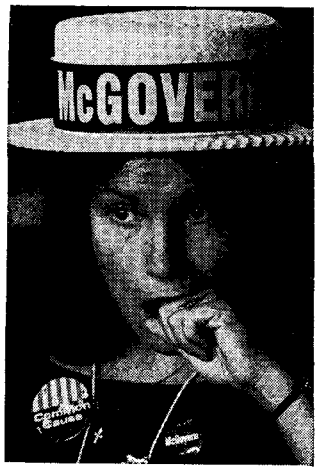
In one of the most terrifying parables ever written about our duality of innocence and violence—Hawthorne's "The Gentle Boy"—a Quaker child is stoned to death by a band of Puritan children who will not forgive him for being of a dissident sect, for defiling their community of saints. The greatest nineteenth-century American novelists recognized our lust for purity and attacked the myth of the American Adam and the New World Eden. James Fenimore Cooper saw this Adam for what he was, a projection of the European imagination upon the New World, a creature to get rid of as soon as possible so that Americans might gain humility. And, unless *Moby Dick* is just a great story about whaling, it can be said that Melville viewed the *Pequod*'s striving for earthly paradise as sacrilegious. Ishmael alone was saved because he had been converted by a heathen to the acceptance of his identity with the historical Adam —whose salvation is not of this world.

Myths are dangerous enough; perverted myths are devastating. What our prophetic novelists also sensed is that throughout the nineteenth century our ideal of moral perfection was being detached from its earlier context of faith and attached to ideals of material progress and political superiority. The colonial vision of a God-chosen people was secularized and perverted into the vision of an Anglo-Saxon nation superior in its national customs and material might. "The American Constitution is a wonderful provision for the intelligence, sagacity, energy, restlessness and indomitable will of such a race as the Anglo Saxon." This from a *Harper's Magazine* editorial of 1846, the year after the phrase "Manifest Destiny" was coined. The editorial went on to exalt us as "a race in which intensest home feelings combine with a love of enterprise and colonisation, a race that fears no thing, claims everything within reach, and believes in a destiny of incomparable and immeasurable grandeur." As H. Richard Niebuhr put it, Manifest Destiny envisioned "a kingdom of the Anglo-Saxon race which was destined to bring light to men by means of lamps manufactured in America." Manifest Destiny crystallized in the years after the Texan revolt, when the possibilities for territorial expansion combined with the millennial ideal of America's redemptive mission. Ethical ambiguities arose when our ancient desire to promote virtue in the world was united with the new reality of our power. Moral perfection was equated with material might; the arrogance of innocence was inextricably joined to the arrogance of force. If our sense of Manifest Destiny seems more tenacious and spiraling than France's *mission civilisatrice* or England's White Man's Burden, it may be because its historical origins were of a fanatical religious nature. As we entered into the arena of global politics in this century, scoring one success after another, our redeemer complex was suffused with a new aspiration for the honor of invincibility. Nixon: "I shall not be the first American President to preside over an American defeat."

Recently, while walking past the parking lot of my country store, I saw two interesting bumper stickers: one a bright-hued American flag adorned with the slogan, "These Colors Don't Run"; the other a Y-shaped peace symbol with the printed comment, "The Footprint of America's Chickens."

Have we ever witnessed such a proliferation of idolatrous symbols as in the past six years of dissent over Vietnam? The defensive jingoisms, "I'm Proud To Be an American," "Love It or Leave It," were accompanied by the extraordinary proliferation of American flags—jeweled flags in the lapels of matrons, flags on blue jeans, flags on cupcakes, flags on car windows, flags flying from almost every house in our heartland. This country has always tended, at times of crisis, to divide into polarities of rigid self-righteousness and apocalyptic guilt. It is as if, at such times, the primeval tension of the Puritan mind, the dilemma of the debased creature chosen to build a city on the hill, reveals its most flagrant contradictions. The decades preceding the Civil War saw such a cleav-





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age. While Daniel Webster and other supporters of the status quo were saying that the best thing to do about slavery was "to stop talking about it," the Abolitionist Theodore Weld was fulminating that the nation could be saved from its sins only by "repentance, immediate, profound, proclaimed abroad, wide as our infamy and damning guilt."

But Vietnam aggravated this tension between self-idolatry and masochistic contrition to an unprecedented degree. It exaggerated—to a much greater extent than our fratricidal Civil War—our ancient self-image of a God-chosen people who can do no wrong. It heightened our inclination to sacralize the symbols of civil authority. The very obscurity of this war's motives incited the majority to clutch more fiercely than ever to its old myths of American innocence and Edenic perfection, while the minority floundered in self-flagellation. And yet those who hooted and jeered at our rites of expiation, who uprooted the trees of life on our village greens, are anything but our enemies. Their increasing idolization of the flag, their desperate retreat into the shelter of patriotic symbols, was caused by their nebulous sense that there was something drastically wrong with the war. Duped by leaders who promised them a quick and glorious victory, and who made criticism of their policies difficult through the most extensive program of government lying in our history, they turned their anger toward a surrogate enemy: the protesters, attackers of American innocence and perfection.

While one America plastered jeweled flags onto its lapels, the other America burned the flag or refused to salute it. At the opposite pole of a nation split asunder by Vietnam are the excesses of the Left. The SDS adopted the spelling, "Amerika." Various radicals asserted that we are living under a regime as repressive as that of Nazi Germany. The Youth Against War and Fascism marched outside the Danbury Jail screaming, "Free the Poor, Jail the Rich," and then (for lack of impact) turned around and tried this one: "Kill the Rich, Free the Poor." Many deplorers of the radicals' fragmentary tactics—the Sidney Hooks and Irving Howes—have traced the Right's self-idolatry to the Left's apocalyptic arrogance. They have failed to see that both sides had a common source of national unease; that the blind patriotism of the Right has been incited by an administration rhetoric more divisive, jingoistic, and self-adulatory than any in memory.

At a Congressional hearing held shortly after the disclosures of the Mylai massacres, I heard an American doctor testify about some tortures of North Vietnamese prisoners committed by the South Vietnamese with the tacit approval of American advisers. According to Dr. Gordon Livingstone, the use of crank telephones to apply electric shocks to the prisoners' bodies was jokingly referred to by one American adviser as "The Bell Telephone Hour."

The disclosure of Mylai, the further unmasking of atrocities that it triggered, and the trial of Lieutenant Calley composed some of the most horrifying and fascinating moral moments of the Vietnam war. Under proper leadership these events could have helped Americans to admit their capacity for evil. With Nixon's outrageous preverdict depreciation of Calley's guilt and his rapid interference with a life sentence imposed by the due process of military law, we stood revealed as slum landlords on the remains of our Eden. Mylai could have led us to reflect on the earlier atrocities committed under our flag and so shamefully omitted from—or deified in—our children's history books: the slaughter of hundreds of Sioux women and children at Wounded Knee, the massacre of Filipino civilians during the Spanish-American War, the tragedy of Hiroshima. Mylai was also a rare opportunity for Americans to reflect on the principles of accountability that the United States evolved at the German and Japanese war trials, guidelines by which we sentenced to death hundreds of Japanese and Germans. But lurking in our myth of American exceptionalism is the notion that we are immune from the very laws we impose upon others.

If anything was revealed by Mylai, it was our strong streak of Calvinist pessimism. The Harris polls taken in the wake of the disclosures showed that the majority of Americans held to the ancient fatalisms that war has always been hell, that man is, by nature, too corrupt to improve war's conditions, that there is no redemption in sight from its horrors. Mylai exposed us as victims of

1971

1972



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the increasingly impersonal technicism of the style of warfare evolved in Vietnam; it was "just another job to be done" with "American know-how." But a still more awesome finding of the polls was that the main thrust of Americans' anger was not directed at Calley's actions or at the bureaucracy of guilt. It was directed at the media for having revealed the massacres. We simply did not want to know. The disclosures of Mylai had perhaps come too late. Our apathy revealed a numbing of conscience that has also grown to pervade our attitude toward domestic corruption.

NEW YORK POST, OCTOBER 10.

Washington, (WP). FBI agents have established that the Watergate bugging incident stemmed from a massive campaign of political spying and sabotage conducted on behalf of President Nixon's reelection and directed by officials of the White House and the Committee for the Reelection of the President.

Law enforcement sources said that the campaign included forging letters and distributing them under the candidates' letterheads; leaking false and manufactured items to the press; throwing campaign schedules into disarray; seizing confidential campaign files, and investigating the lives of dozens of Democratic campaign workers . . . .

Can we forget the scandals caused, just decades ago, by General Vaughan's deep freeze, by Sherman Adams's vicuña coat, by Richard Nixon's pathetic cocker spaniel? But is it any wonder, after ten years of administrations that have lied to us systematically about the origins of a war, about the "democratic" nature of the client state on whose behalf we are waging it, about bombings, about casualties, about the treatment of our prisoners, about the course of American withdrawal, that such a blatant espionage scandal as the Watergate incident fails to make any impact on our nation's conscience? Our dual numbness to human atrocities and to the lies that enable these atrocities to persist leads us to be equally numb to every other area of corruption and deceit in our nation. We seem to grow increasingly jaded with each new revelation: the ITT scandal, the wheat scandal, the army's illegal surveillance of hundreds of thousands of civilians, General Lavelle's disobedience of the chiefs of staff. Our constant exposure to the lying that has systematically poured out of Washington in the past ten years—along with the abrogations of our civil liberties—has had effects similar to an organism's increasing tolerance to a drug.

Some years ago SDS had an idiotic slogan that went, "Bring the war home." The irony is that our government has brought the war home in a way SDS never could. It has treated its people as an enemy, surveilling us, dividing us, breeding self-hate and provocateurs among us as systematically as it has lied. Perhaps the most terrifying impact of the Vietnam War on America is that we shall get increasingly used to being manipulated, that we shall fail to expect truth and freedom, and that, in a vindication of Orwell's prophesies, we shall even cease to desire them. In such an eventuality the moral of American history would be that the community steeped in the myth of its moral perfection is the one that adjusts most easily to docile acceptance of evil.

Which leads me to worry about what Vietnam has done to our children.

Over the past years, covering the trials of political dissenters, I have seen young Americans turn out in droves to honor the defendants' acts of moral witness. I have repeatedly stood in courthouse elevators filled with middle-aged civil servants who mutter, teeth clenched, "Those kids, those goddamn kids . . . ." "If I had one of those sixteen-year-old longhairs under my roof, I'd kill him."

We have often been satirized by older nations for seeking our innocence in a cult of our children. It is part of our Edenic need for renascence, for the eternal perpetuation of the new, that has led us to indulge so ardently in the adulation of youth. That was the reason behind the Big Hollywood Dream Machine, the pioneering of plastic surgery, the suicide of movie stars at the threshold of middle age. And yet there was an ambivalence in our adulation. Hating ourselves for losing our own youth, we nursed a combination of love and envious resentment for our children. Vietnam exacerbated a new hatred of youth, as it exacerbated all divisions among us.

It had always struck me, at the large peace demonstrations of the 1960s, that these liturgies of penance were being enacted mostly by the young, as if only the innocent young were capable of communal guilt. In the past decade a vast moral movement among our children led them to question the growing American myth of power. They were the first generation to fully reap the fruits of our mid-century global might, and they hated the taste. The parents were enraged not only because their children disavowed the ideals of material success, went to Maine to cultivate potatoes or paint houses upon graduation from Harvard, or joined religious sects in their quest for a new purity. Their parents were equally frightened because the young questioned primeval American myths: They saw no Eden in America; they refused the equation of national power and moral perfection; and, therefore, on the issue of Vietnam they were ready to accept their nation's defeat, and even desired it.

Often disjointedly, sometimes brutishly, our children tried to drag us out of our Eden, tried to make us moral by bringing us the adulthood of self-criticism. Until then our narcissistic self-adulation had suspended us in a kind of retarded adolescence, in what Kierkegaard referred to as the "aesthetic," "pre-moral" stage of human growth. We not only refused to follow our children into adulthood, we hated them for what they did; we tried to kill them for it. Our myths of innocence and perfection threatened, we responded with violence: Chicago, Kent State, Jackson State. The last bloody episode in the movie *Joe*, in which the father kills his own dissident child by mistake, was never outrageous to me; it was lugubriously true. We sent our young to be killed in Vietnam, where they were supposed to redeem the image of our moral



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purity, and then brutalized those here who tried to stop the killing. Like desert tribemen putting their scapegoats in the desert for a rite of purification, we left our children in Asia to expiate the abstraction of our honor, while at home—in courtrooms, jails, and in the bloodied streets of demonstrations—they preserved the little true honor and true innocence the country had left.

Like the young of America, George McGovern has been overwhelmingly concerned with criticizing the consequences of our colossal power. Although I am writing before Election Day, I venture that his defeat will show the degree to which Vietnam heightened the nation's self-idolatry, made us increasingly defensive to criticism, and fragmented the forces needed for a mass-based progressive movement. McGovern criticized the entire thrust of American messianism. Like the young, he criticized the nation's moral values, not just the ethics of the opposite party. Like the young, he threatened the country with the maturity of self-criticism, with the end of our myth of innocence. McGovern was trying to demythologize our cults of Americanism and point to a new transnational morality that would allow American priests to pray, unharassed, for the dead of North Vietnam.

To a greater extent than any candidate in decades, George McGovern tried to infuse into our global role some of the prophetic dimension of his Christian heritage, which teaches the redeeming power of guilt and penance. But the majority of this nation hated him for recalling its failures. McGovern talked about saving lives rather than saving face, and we urged upon him our mythology of "honor." He warned us of self-idolatry, and the administration accused him of indulging in "self-hate" for America. He warned us of the potential dangers of our colossal power, and Nixon's entourage accused him of hoisting "the white flag of surrender."

It is increasingly clear that Nixon's and Kissinger's tactic was to endorse in *theory* a goal—the stability of a non-Communist South Vietnam—which they knew they could not achieve in *practice*. The cornerstone of their policy was the obscene rationale of the "decent interval": The United States must choreograph its eventual departure from Vietnam—thousands of lives lost in the process—in such a way that it does not *appear* to abandon the Saigon regime, thus absolving us of guilt in the tragedy. This search for a false and abstract purity has been but a new modulation of our traditional obsession with American innocence. It is based on myths of moral perfection as theologically antiquated as they are symbolically false. Our hunt for honor in Vietnam, as our historic search for purity, is well summed up by D. H. Lawrence's description of Ahab's crew, "monomaniacs of the idea . . . searching for the white abstract evil." That white, abstract evil is the myth of American innocence, and it can only be perpetuated with the concomitant of all false innocence: violence □

Speculative Consequences

# FOUR "WHAT IFS" FOR VIETNAM

*By Herman Kahn*

"To abandon South Vietnam at the present moment," writes Herman Kahn, "is to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory." Among the consequences of a too hasty withdrawal, he continues, might be a Ronald Reagan-Creighton Abrams ticket in 1976 and the possibility that Hanoi might win in a ceasefire what it has lost on the battlefield.

These post-election days of 1972 would seem an appropriate time to consider the consequences of America's involvement in Southeast Asia. We are now far enough removed from the origins of our involvement to be able to take in the whole scene from a distant perspective, and the fog of campaign rhetoric no longer obscures the strategic horizons. I propose to attempt to illuminate the consequences by outlining four different Vietnam scenarios, each of them predicated on divergent courses of action taken by the United States. They are: First, what would have happened if the United States had not escalated its commitment in Vietnam in 1965? Second, what would happen if the United States precipitously and unilaterally withdrew from Vietnam? Third, what are the likely consequences of a cease-fire? And fourth, what would it take to achieve a "victory" in Vietnam?

*What would have happened if the United States had not escalated its commitment in Vietnam in 1965?*

It is possible that Vietnam will prove to be the last pivotal battle in the Cold War, the battle that confirms the success of our containment policy and ushers in an era of stability. This hypothesis is not provable in any final sense, but I will argue that it is a perfectly defensible one. In order to make that case, I would like to recall another time when the world faced the need to contain an aggressive

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power—March 7, 1936, the day that German troops occupied a piece of indubitably German territory, the Rhineland. Many historians now believe that British and French intervention on that fateful day would very likely have resulted in the overthrow of Hitler—perhaps by his own generals—or at least proved so severe a blow to his charisma and authority that World War II could never have occurred.

But even if Britain and France had intervened successfully, they would hardly have escaped criticism. Any subsequent instabilities in the German government or feelings of grievance among the German people would doubtless have been blamed on this "premature and unnecessary" action—particularly since the world would not know (and could hardly be able to conceive in its most far-flung imaginings) what this action had averted.

Of course, one might argue that World War II had some positive effects; a successful worldwide move toward decolonization and the rapid rise of Europe and Japan to new levels of prosperity were partly due to the after-shock of the war. But these are conjectural matters, and I would guess that today most people would agree that France and Britain should have intervened in the Rhineland. They did not, and as Churchill said in a speech two weeks later, the result was "an immense gain in prestige to the Nazi government."

Its new prestige spread well beyond the borders of Germany. In Latin America quite disparate forces began to coalesce around fascist ideologies of one sort or another, probably less because these ideologies were intrinsically attractive than because fascism seemed a likely winner against democratic and capitalist alternatives modeled on the United States. In much the same way anti-Soviet factions in Eastern Europe began to rally to Hitler's banner. And extremist elements in Italy and Japan were also encouraged by the prevailing indications of France's and Britain's weakness.

I would argue that similar "domino" effects were avoided because the United States was not willing to practice appeasement in Vietnam. Shortly after the election of Lyndon Johnson in 1964, there were 20,000 American "advisers" in Vietnam. What would have happened if President Johnson had let the number of American troops remain at that level and had not begun to bomb the North?

In retrospect, it seems almost certain that South Vietnam would have fallen within a few months. Indeed, between Election Day in the United States and the assumption of power by General Ky in mid-June (and even perhaps for some time afterward), few sober observers in the United States would have given great odds that even such drastic reinforcement as President Johnson did undertake could prevent the collapse of the Saigon regime. In their hearts many American officials and nearly *all* of the U.S. and foreign press corps on the scene were almost totally pessimistic in their appraisal of the situation.

In the wake of the likely collapse of the Saigon regime, there would have been a hasty withdrawal of all U.S. advisers—perhaps after some bloody incidents. Most observers concede that Hanoi would have moved quickly to unite the two Vietnams, possibly under the cloak of holding, somewhat belatedly, the referendum on reunion originally scheduled for 1956.

The government of this newly united country of more than thirty million people would have enjoyed the highest morale. (Had it not, after all, just triumphed over the strongest power in the world?) A Communist Vietnam would doubtless have been anxious to settle scores with some of its neighbors. Prince Norodom Sihanouk, then head of the neutralist Cambodian government, has said on several occasions that under these circumstances his country would have been forced to come to terms with the Communists and might even have been absorbed by Vietnam. Laos would clearly have gone under, too, unless the United States had tried to make a stand there—a much more difficult and hopeless job than in Vietnam. While today the Thai government looks relatively strong, the many points of strain that existed—and still exist—in that country would clearly have been increased; and at least in northeast Thailand a serious Communist rebellion would have been entirely feasible. Perhaps the United States would have sent troops to put down this rebellion—that cannot be predicted. But it is entirely possible that Thailand, which throughout its history has not been known to sacrifice itself in the service of a consistent policy, would have attempted to switch sides under increased Communist pressure.

Flanked by a united Communist Vietnam and Sukarno's fellow-traveling Indonesia—and with a sanctuary for insurgents along its borders—Malaysia would have been in a tight spot indeed. Presumably, the 500 or so Communist guerrillas still left in northern Malaysia would have been greatly reinforced, creating a serious threat to the government. Doubtless, also, many of the country's Malays, realizing that they now faced a Hobson's choice between a revival of civil war and acquiescence to a people of the same race and religion, would have pushed for a settlement with Indonesia. Such an eventuality, in turn, might have sufficiently altered the balance of power within Indonesia for the local Communists to have staged a successful uprising—similar to the one that was thwarted in that country in September 1965—with the result that Indonesia would have gone Communist or at least firmly aligned itself with Peking.

At this point we can assume that leftist dissidents around the world would have sought advice from China and Vietnam on "how to do it." Certainly, the kind of person in Latin America whose politics are motivated principally by an anti-American bias (and who was thus pro-fascist in the Thirties, pro-Soviet in the late Forties and early Fifties, and pro-Chinese in the late Fifties) would have turned pro-Chinese again. Forced to compete with a worldwide resurgence of Chinese influence, the Soviet Union might have been driven to a more extreme



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position in international affairs, particularly since extremist tactics might now pay greater dividends.

While the above scenario may seem as if it has many contingent elements, I would argue that the biggest uncertainty would not have been the events in Southeast Asia but rather their effect on the rest of the world. I feel relatively sure that the American escalation in 1965 sharply reduced the substantial possibility that Southeast Asia would have gone Communist. Whether this situation would have created an overwhelming "wave of the future" psychology in the worldwide Communist movement—and greatly discouraged its opponents—remains a more debatable proposition.

*What would happen if the United States precipitously and unilaterally withdrew from Vietnam?*

Imagine that the United States instituted the policy of withdrawal suggested by Senator McGovern during the campaign. That is, if after all these years of fighting and preventing the catastrophes enumerated above, we simply informed the South Vietnamese government of our intention to evacuate all American troops and equipment, while simultaneously letting the Thai government know that we were going to keep our bases in Thailand until the North Vietnamese released our prisoners of war and then we would pull out of their country as well. It seems to me that this approach overlooks the near certainty that the Thais and South Vietnamese, whose lives we were playing with, would be furious at these actions, viewing them with good reason as a double cross. A separate peace is always an extremely unpleasant betrayal. In this case the South Vietnamese would have nothing to lose by executing their legal rights to the limit. Even if they didn't try to interfere physically with the departure of American troops, Saigon would almost certainly insist that we leave most or all of our equipment behind. South Vietnam is, after all, their sovereign territory, and they can nationalize anything on it. They could even, if they wished, charge a head tax for departing American soldiers. And if they really wanted to cause trouble, they could charge individual Americans with all kinds of crimes, which many soldiers have no doubt committed. All of this is completely legal, and I fail to see how the Americans could prevent it, short of shooting up our allies and turning a withdrawal into an escape.

As for the Thais, in the event of a hasty American withdrawal it would be important for them to make some kind of a deal with Hanoi as fast as possible. After all, the North Vietnamese have been furious with them for allowing us to use their bases so freely during the war. Hanoi's minimum requirement would probably be the installation of a *pro forma* Communist regime in Thailand—the Thais have done this kind of thing in the past—and our immediate expulsion.

At that point we would have no hold at all on the North Vietnamese. Now, it is quite clear that the North Vietnamese have suffered severely during the war. My own conjecture is that something like one out of every four young men between the ages of seventeen and twenty-four have died. What would encourage them to send back American prisoners when the mere announcement of our unilateral withdrawal is a sign that they have won everything that they could have hoped for? In the past the North Vietnamese have indicated that they would insist on trying certain Americans for war crimes. Even if they released some of our prisoners, they would keep others for these show trials. They would presumably want indemnities as well, especially since by our mode of withdrawal—and the rhetoric that would accompany it—we would have clearly admitted our guilt. In other words, we can't pull out this way. It would leave us defenseless against our enemy's worst accusations.

Besides being damaging to our own self-interest, a hasty withdrawal would be cruelly unfair to our South Vietnamese allies, many of whose lives would be in great peril. To understand the so-called "bloodbath" theory of reprisals, it is important to realize that the killing which occurs through legal government channels is far worse than the random killing due to war or other circumstances. As an American, ask yourself which you would prefer—the current situation in which some 50,000 people a year are killed in automobile accidents or a situation in which only 5,000 were killed at the selection of government officials for political purposes. And reprisals by the North Vietnamese would be bound to follow an American withdrawal. For if the North Vietnamese controlled South Vietnam, it would only be a matter of time before they took Laos and most probably Cambodia. They will then be forced to incorporate into a single Communist society diverse populations that share little but their hatred of the North Vietnamese—and to do this, they will have to impose strict Communist discipline on a society in which social cohesion has been greatly disrupted. In other words, they will be forced to impose some sort of terror. Many revolutions have faced this kind of imperative—and the successful ones have accepted the need for terror.

Nor would there be a lack of high government officials and military commanders against whom the North Vietnamese have very serious grievances. In addition, almost everybody in recent years—city people, prosperous farmers, landlords, villagers in South Vietnam's Popular Forces, and millions of the anti-Communist ethnic minorities have registered their opposition to the Vietcong by accepting rifles from the Saigon government and lending it their support in various ways. Directly or through their immediate families, at least half the population is now in more or less active opposition to the Vietcong; indeed, some member of one out of every three families is on the government payroll. Although the number of people who would be killed in a North Vietnamese purge is strictly conjectural, informed estimates have ranged from tens of thousands to several hundred thousand—and my guess would lie somewhere in the middle. Certainly, if they were forced to choose between convicting all the guilty at the cost of convict-



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ing many who are innocent and saving the innocent at the cost of missing many who are guilty, the North Vietnamese would be acting entirely out of character if they did not opt for the former.

Nor would a precipitous American withdrawal do damage only to the fabric of South Vietnamese society. It is unreasonable to assume that a country such as the United States can lose this kind of war—particularly at a moment when its professional military think they are close to victory—and not pay a heavy price. While I would not expect a revolt in the U.S. armed forces similar to the French military revolt in Algeria, I would not be surprised if many of the officers who were deeply involved in Vietnam resigned their commissions and entered the political arena in some capacity. Certainly, a large number of Americans would share their resentment, feeling that to abandon South Vietnam at the present moment would be to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. I myself would have nothing but contempt for the government that did it.

I can imagine a deeply conservative trend sweeping the United States in the wake of such a withdrawal. In 1976 we might see Gov. Ronald Reagan and Gen. Creighton Abrams running on the Republican ticket. Abrams could talk about what a stab in the back the American people received by our withdrawal—a perfectly legitimate view. Reagan could talk about pornography and the need for going back to basic American values. I could even imagine a semiauthoritarian government being elected to sort out the mess, a situation similar to what happened in France when it pulled out of Algeria. Fortunately for France, de Gaulle was able to put the pieces together. We may not have a man of his caliber available.

*What are the likely consequences of a cease-fire?*

The outcome of the cease-fire will hinge on innumerable details, so I shall not try to cover all possibilities. The following scenarios, one optimistic and one pessimistic, suggest the main features.

*Optimistic Scenario:*

There is a cease-fire and partial political settlement with the North Vietnamese that results in their exclusion from power in South Vietnam—that is, it results in the defeat of their attempt to unify the country under their leadership. This defeat is, of course, only a temporary one; yet it could become permanent. But why should the North Vietnamese enter into an agreement that results in their defeat? The answer is a combination of two factors. The first is that they overestimate their chances of political take-over under the terms of the cease-fire. Such an overestimate is by no means an unreasonable possibility. In the Tet offensive in 1968, for example, it became clear that the North Vietnamese expected a great deal more support from the South Vietnamese population than they, in fact, received, and in the attacks of last May they greatly underestimated popular resistance. While they may have learned their lesson, it is also possible that they may make the same mistake, or a variant of it, once again. The second factor that might lead the North Vietnamese to accept a settlement resulting in their defeat would be the realization on Hanoi's part that its current situation and immediate prospects are very unfavorable. Worried about the genuine threat of betrayal by their Chinese and Russian allies—as well as the possibility that the American public and government might be in a more escalatory mood after the election—Hanoi might be anxious to negotiate a settlement.

After the settlement, this optimistic scenario continues, the South Vietnamese Army holds together and remains the dominant power in the area of the country in which most of the population lives. All of the various political groups in Saigon realize that it is the army that protects them from Communist execution and makes possible the preservation of non-violent politics in much of the country. Therefore, everyone supports the army. The army, in turn, holds together and gains in morale, perceiving that it has the backing of the population.

In this situation, though in some ways the government will be partly paralyzed by internal disagreement, it is able to act. As long as such a government is assured of adequate external support and as long as it is not painted, rightly or wrongly, as a facade behind which a Communist take-over could proceed, it might well survive.

*Pessimistic Scenario:*

In this scenario there is a cease-fire and a temporary coalition government. At the time the agreement is reached, the South Vietnamese government controls the great bulk of the populated territory, and the great majority of the people oppose a Communist take-over. Communist forces are left in control of a minority of the population. In addition, they occupy the border areas of Cambodia and the Ho Chi Minh Trail area of Laos. As soon as the cease-fire begins, the North Vietnamese start executing all political opposition in territories reachable by their own forces, and they move military supplies into forward positions in order to attack in case the cease-fire ends. These military supplies include tanks, artillery, and a large volume of stored supplies of fuel and ammunition. The South Vietnamese, of course, are not unaware of what is going on, and, accordingly, the army comes to believe that it has been betrayed by the United States and that President Thieu is helpless to protect himself and to protect them. On top of all this the North Vietnamese make it clear that the agreement, which made possible the cease-fire, represents a surrender by the United States, that they do not have to comply with the terms of the agreement in the long run because U.S. forces will never return, that they intend to win control over the entire country, and that the "enemies of the people" will then be punished. At this point each group in the South—the religious sects, the labor unions, the political parties, and the army officers—begins to wonder how it can ensure its individual survival. Each citizen, in fact, attempts to predict the winner of the political-mili-



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tary contest that will continue under the guise of the cease-fire. It becomes clear that, if one supports the government and the government falls, then that person will be killed. On the other hand, the Communists offer safety and protection to leaders who are willing to support the "neutralist" faction. In these circumstances most groups and most individuals, naturally enough, try to hedge their bets.

Shortly after the cease-fire Vietcong cadres seize control of a village in the Mekong Delta. The local South Vietnamese popular forces are warned by the Communists not to interfere and are told that the South Vietnamese Army will not attempt to restore the official government of the village. The local army commander, although ordered by the government in Saigon to restore the village government, decides that obeying the order would be imprudent and delays moving in. During this delay the Vietcong try, "convict," and execute local officials and call for an election to select new ones. The Communists win, of course, and declare themselves the village government. When the South Vietnamese Army unit finally decides to take control of the village, the new government refuses to allow it to enter and orders the local popular-force unit to oppose the army if necessary. This is sufficient basis for the army commander to question his orders and stand aside. At that point the neutralist faction in the Saigon government moves to prevent the army from trying to restore the former government, especially since its officials are now all dead.

Word of this event travels throughout the country and makes similar efforts by Vietcong cadres more and more easy. The impression that the Communists are the ultimate victors in the war gains momentum, resulting in increased political support for the neutralist faction. That faction is thus able to gain a significant voice in controlling the army's movements and seriously hampers its ability to ensure the safety of political leaders. It is easy to see by now that this scenario can have only one ending: the complete Communist domination of Vietnam.

The interesting point about this pessimistic scenario is the light it sheds on a dilemma that both President Thieu and President Nixon must wrestle with now. The outcome of peace negotiations depends not only on the terms of the settlement but also on the way in which they are perceived by all sides. If the Saigon government remains unified, it is likely to be able to survive almost any agreement. The government's ability to remain unified depends, in turn, upon its confidence that South Vietnam's interests are reflected in the settlement and that reasonable American support will continue to be forthcoming. Thus, President Thieu has a great interest in making it look as though any agreement with Hanoi is completely satisfactory to him and does not represent an American betrayal. But if the issue it at all in doubt, he would try to convince the United States not to sign the agreement or at least to alter it to South Vietnam's benefit. He would claim that the proposed agreement is totally unsatisfactory to him and, if adopted, would doom his regime, for he can have no other argument against peace. If it becomes known that we have forced Thieu to accept an unsatisfactory agreement by threatening to remove our support for his government (for example, by slowing down the flow of funds and letting the ammunition supply of the South Vietnamese Army become depleted), then South Vietnam will feel betrayed by us and might feel compelled to surrender to a seemingly victorious North Vietnam.

*What would it take to achieve "victory" in Vietnam?*

I believe that we are about to win the war in Vietnam. By thus announcing our imminent victory, I do not mean to imply that we will achieve complete peace in Indochina; nor do I mean that the South will become totally independent of American support. I mean that South Vietnam will achieve a degree of "pacification" similar to Israel's. As long as two or three years after the last Israeli-Arab war, the visitor to Tel Aviv or Haifa incurred an uncomfortably high risk of being killed or injured by an Arab bomb—there being about 200 such casualties per year at that time. Even so, the chance of being killed or injured by an Israeli driver was still about four times higher. Now, in terms of population, 200 casualties per year in Israel correspond to about 2,000 deaths in South Vietnam, or 20,000 in the United States. This situation is unpleasant but not unlivable. Prior to the North Vietnamese offensive last spring about 80 to 90 per cent of the South Vietnamese population lived under conditions similar to but only slightly worse than conditions in Israel. Those conditions will return rapidly, and though they may be disrupted again, the South Vietnamese are rapidly acquiring the capability to deter large conventional attacks—as the battles of Anloc and Hué have already demonstrated.

Instead of realizing the importance of those victories, nearly all the liberal commentators in this country pointed to the North Vietnamese invasion as an indication of the failure of Vietnamization because its repulsion required American assistance. But the Vietnamization policy was not intended to enable the South Vietnamese to prevent the massive Korean-type attack that Hanoi launched, complete with 500 or so tanks and large numbers of 130 mm artillery and Strella missiles, any one of these new weapons being by itself a very major technological escalation in the war. (Indeed, this eventuality was so unexpected that we had evacuated all but 72 of our heavy tanks from the embattled area.) The American response was not large compared with the magnitude of the enemy offensive. In fact, if I myself had realized how big the North Vietnamese attack was, I would probably not have stated, as I did on a television broadcast at the time, that the South Vietnamese would hold, and hold quite well. They did hold quite well. Indeed, in the fifty-five years since the Battle of Cambrai in 1917, no unprepared infantry anywhere has held up against a surprise attack by tanks except at two places—Anloc and Hué. (It



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may yet turn out that these two battles will go down as turning points in world history. For example, suppose the current *rapprochement* between the United States and the Soviet Union has great success. I would argue that Nixon could not have gone to Moscow if Anloc and Hue had fallen.)

Almost all the liberal commentators argued that the U.S. counteroffensive was useless, irrelevant, and maybe even immoral—one rationale for this position being that American bombing could have no effect on the North Vietnamese offensive for at least three months. This argument implied either that we did not care what happened in Vietnam three months hence or that the issue would be decided in the enemy's favor by then. Of course, we did care, and the South did hold. Although I admit that, if the North Vietnamese had used their tanks properly, they would not only have taken Anloc and Hue but probably have won the war, a good deal of credit must still be given to the heroism and fighting capabilities of the South Vietnamese.

This is not to say that South Vietnam could survive without American assistance, at least as long as the North receives help from China and the Soviet Union. But neither could Israel survive without U.S. aid under similar conditions, and liberals do not ordinarily condemn Israel for failure to achieve such independence. Until about 1975 South Vietnam will require the presence of American advisers—using the term advisers in the strictest sense. Initially, 20,000 to 30,000 U.S. advisers would remain, and this number would decline gradually in the coming years. South Vietnamese pilots would take over air operations as they become trained, and by 1975 there should be no need for American pilots.

In addition to military assistance, South Vietnam will require considerable economic aid. About $2 billion per year should not only ensure South Vietnam's continued survival but also make possible an extraordinary economic take-off. In fact, this take-off has already begun. With the continuation of a successful pacification program, the economy should become more and more dynamic. For, as the survival of South Vietnam becomes increasingly evident to other countries, investment—particularly Japanese investment—will be attracted there and development will accelerate. Despite the current no-growth enthusiasm in some quarters, the resulting prosperity in South Vietnam will look very impressive to the world.

Moreover, such a program of military and economic development would permit the United States to carry out its long-range policy of containing Communism and preserving American credibility in the eyes of other nations, which was exactly what our intervention in Vietnam was intended to accomplish in the first place. Vietnam might then prove to be the last major battle in the Cold War, a struggle that began in another small country, Czechoslovakia, and was continued in such seemingly unimportant places as Korea and Cuba. If this is the case, then success in Vietnam is a prerequisite to the coming era of stability that all of us desire. □

**WIT TWISTER NO. 298**

Edited by ARTHUR SWAN

*The object of the game is to complete the poem by thinking of one word whose letters, when rearranged will yield the appropriate word for each series of blanks. Each dash within a blank corresponds to a letter of the word.*

— — — — — up! Defeat is not disgrace.

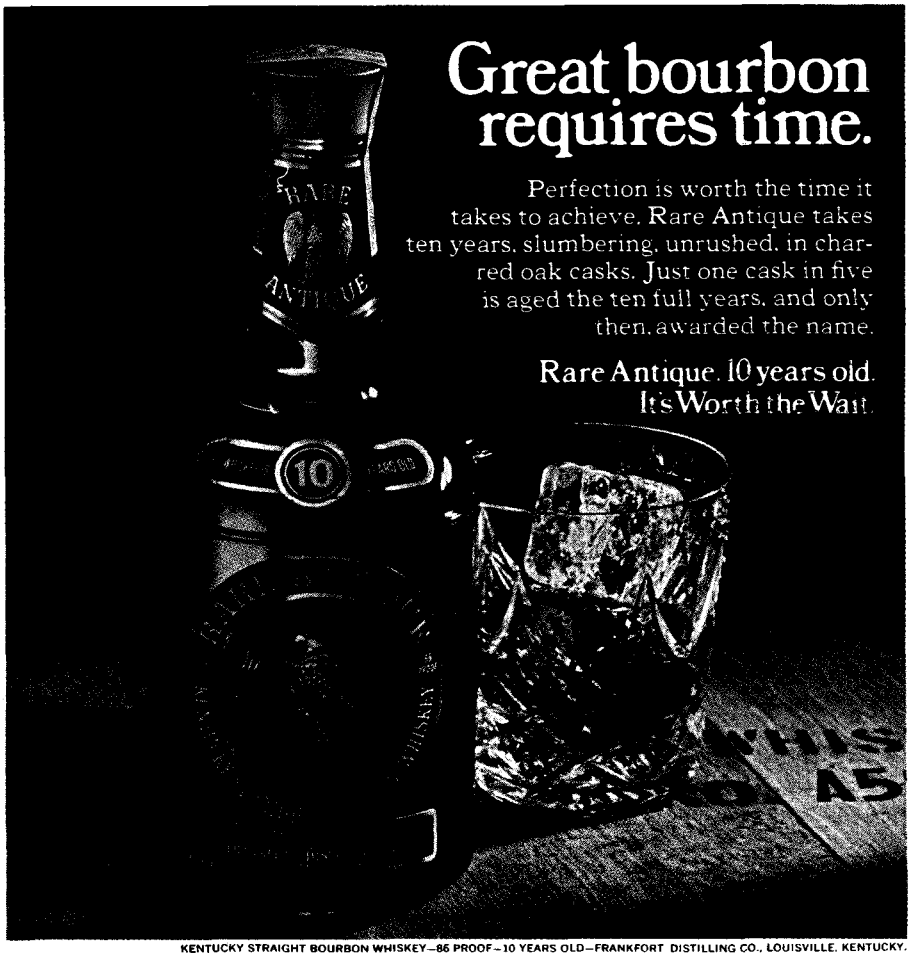
— — — — — remarks are out of place.

Those few who well the — — — — — — toss

Were not dismayed by their first loss.

**Dr. Gilbert V. Plain**
**Ridgecrest, California**

Answer to Wit Twister will be found on page 88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Rare Antique. 10 years old. It's Worth the Wait.
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# SR REVIEWS Books

# "I Will Be Good"

BY PETER STANSKY

**QUEEN VICTORIA: From her birth to the death of the Prince Consort. By Cecil Woodham-Smith. Illustrated. 486 pages. Alfred A. Knopf. $10.**

Cecil Woodham-Smith has written a life of Victoria that is a delight to read. This is not the first biography of the Queen, nor is it likely to be the last, given the seemingly inexhaustible fascination of that tiny, formidable woman who ruled over the greatest empire of the modern world for sixty-four years, but it is hard to imagine a better one. With an extraordinary mastery of personal detail and a full knowledge of nineteenth-century history, not only in England but wherever English interests were involved, Mrs. Woodham-Smith, in this first volume of her heroically scaled biography, has brought Victoria from her birth in 1819 to the death of her beloved husband, Albert, in 1861. It is an impressive achievement, and we can look forward confidently to the second volume, wherein, along with much else, we shall have the answer to the question with which the first volume ends: "What is going to happen now to the poor Queen?" Almost half of her life is yet to come.

It is hard for us to realize how important questions of dynasty were in the age of monarchy and how much could turn on births and survivals, particularly since mortality was no respecter of persons, not even an heir apparent. When George IV's only child, Princess Charlotte, died in 1817, his younger brothers entered the "succession sweepstakes," abandoning mistresses and bastards and clasping to their middle-aged selves wives of suitable pedigree in an attempt to produce an heir for the throne of England.

The fifty-year-old Duke of Kent achieved the desired result. Even before the death of Princess Charlotte he had opened negotiations to become the second husband of the dowager princess of Leiningen, twenty-nine years younger than himself. The death of Charlotte accelerated his suit. The dowager princess accepted him; their marriage was solemnized in the Hall of the Giants in the Schloss Ehrenburg, Coburg. Their only child, conceived with felicitous speed, was Victoria, and it was she who ascended the throne upon the death of William IV in 1837.

The Duke of Kent never doubted that his healthy infant daughter, whom he described as "rather a pocket Hercules than a pocket Venus," would one day be Queen, but he died seventeen years before the event. Thus, Victoria, from her eighth month on, grew up fatherless, and this accounts for much that is paradoxical in her character. On the one hand, she was, in her unsophisticated way, a romantic, capable of deep and unrestrained feeling, reacting powerfully with tears of joy and sorrow to the events of her life. On the other hand, she was shrewd, controlled, self-disciplined, the young girl who could say (and mean what she said) upon being told that she might someday be Queen, "I will be good."

Her education, "the Kensington system"—so-called for the palace in which she resided with her mother—was designed to train her to cope with the duties that would be hers. It was also designed to curb her independent spirit so that she would take guidance from Sir John Conroy, the factotum of her mother's household, who had dreams of glory of himself as the power behind a regency, at the same time that he was appropriating a good part of his employer's income. Victoria would always love and hate deeply: she hated Conroy, whose repressive methods weighed heavily upon a nature that had to express itself, and in reaction she turned for support, and as an outlet, to her beloved governess, the Baroness Lehzen, the first of her "surrogate fathers"—no matter that in this instance the "father" was a woman.

The Victoria who emerged from childhood into young womanhood was extremely obstinate, imperious, and determined to have her own way, but she also needed, and grew excessively dependent upon, the wisdom, sympathy, advice, and affection of an older figure. First there was Lehzen; then, after she became Queen, her first Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne; then, and most important in her life, her first cousin and husband, the adored Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, her own age but a tower of mature strength, whom she married

*Princess Victoria, 1833, from the portrait by Sir George Hayter*

*Peter Stansky is an associate professor of history at Stanford. His most recent book is* The Unknown Orwell, *in collaboration with William Abrahams.*



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in 1840 and by whom she had the nine children who would eventually make her the "Grandmother of Europe."

The personal story is excellently told here. From it emerges a full, convincing portrait of the woman and the Queen. (It is difficult to separate the two, and, of course, it would never have occurred to Victoria herself even to attempt to make such a separation.) She herself was aware of the paradoxes she contained; she was not without some sense of her defects of character. But she insisted that every right be accorded her that belonged to the Throne. She knew that in English law a wife was practically the chattel of her husband; yet no matter how dependent she became upon Albert, she never forgot that she was the monarch and he the consort.

The four Georges, as well as William IV, had wished to maintain as many of their privileges as possible, and so did Victoria. They had not been absolute monarchs, and they had had to make political compromises, participating as very active forces in the political game. So did Victoria, even less absolute in her position than they, but the game was changing rapidly, as more and more of her subjects were given the vote and the middle classes were becoming increasingly wealthy and powerful. The monarchy was moving slowly but irresistibly towards the symbolic position it holds today in the reign of her great-great-granddaughter, but it was still a force to be reckoned with in the play of politics. However, the considerable social and political modifications of nineteenth-century England made it necessary that the game be played with more tact, that the dignified head of the state not appear to take sides. As Victoria sadly wrote to Napoleon III, she was a constitutional and not an absolute monarch. "I have no uncontrolled power of decision; I must adopt the advice of a Council of responsible Ministers, and these Ministers have to meet and to agree on a course of action after having arrived at a *joint conviction* of its justice and utility. They have at the same time to take care that the steps which they wish to take are not only in accordance with the best interest of the country, but also such, that they can be explained to and defended in Parliament, and that their fitness may be brought home to the conviction of the nation."

It was a difficult position, especially given the obstinate and imperious side of her character, and she and Albert were anxious that not one of her rights be removed. But she was also a realist, better able to bend with the times than many of her fellow monarchs. In the

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Osso Bucco (Serves 6)
Brown 6 or 7 lbs. of veal shank—sawed not chopped—in a heavy pot with 2 tablespoons butter and 2 tablespoons olive oil. Turn pieces upright with bones vertical. Add salt and pepper, 1 small grated carrot, ¼ cup chopped celery, 1 medium-sized onion, chopped, and pinch each of rosemary and sage. Cover pot. Simmer for 15 minutes.
Blend 2 tablespoons tomato paste with 1 cup dry white wine. Stir into juices. Add ½ cup water or stock, cover and simmer over low heat. Add small amounts of liquid as necessary. When meat is tender, sprinkle in gremolada, made as follows: Combine grated rind of a small lemon, 2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley, and 1 chopped clove of garlic.
Serve with boiled rice or risotto.
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last analysis, although she was willing to use every weapon she could, including the most emotional ones available to her, she came to realize that eventually she would have to give in to her responsible ministers, who needed the confidence of Parliament, which in its turn had to pay some attention to those who had the vote.

Cecil Woodham-Smith is a very distinguished historian, as her earlier studies of Florence Nightingale, the Crimean War, and the Famine in Ireland have demonstrated, and she has been careful here to set Victoria against the background of the problems and events in her country's history. It is all splendidly done, but at times, if anything, the general historical narrative is a little too complete and Victoria herself tends to fade from the scene. A general problem in any biography is how much background should be given; obviously, when the subject is the titular head of a nation and an expanding empire, the problem is compounded. Perhaps the story of 1848, the Crystal Palace, the Crimean War, the Indian Mutiny might have been trimmed, as we are told somewhat more of those tangled and fascinating episodes than is strictly necessary for an understanding of Victoria's role and feelings.

Indirectly, of course, such seeming digressions demonstrate the growing irrelevance of monarchy in the modern world. Victoria was a factor to be reckoned with all her life, but, increasingly, she came to play a symbolic rather than a decisive role. Her feelings had much less effect on the course of the Crimean War than those of her fellow monarchs. Her attitude toward India was more compassionate and less religiously aggressive than that held by many of her compatriots, but she did not significantly influence the manner of its governance.

It was Albert who guided her in finding ways by which the Crown could maintain as much of its power as possible and yet could disassociate itself from political parties. As Mrs. Woodham-Smith remarks, "Marrying Queen Victoria was Prince Albert's career." A poor German princeling, he did his job well, guiding her steps, although at times—even with him—she could be obstinate and difficult. The last decade of their life together was appropriately full, beginning with the triumph of the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 (Albert's project) and ending, shortly before his death, in the area in which the monarchy continued to be closely involved, foreign affairs, when Albert probably prevented war between England and the United States, toning down the dispatches of protest over the American removal of Confederate delegates from the *Trent*. But he had overworked himself through the decade: the exhausted prince fell an easy victim to typhoid fever.

Victoria had experienced tragedy in a national sense, aware as she was of the sufferings of the ordinary soldier in the Crimea and the deaths during the Indian Mutiny. But it was in 1861 that death entered her private world: that of her mother at the beginning of the year and that of Albert at its end. She greeted her mother's death with what some considered an excess of grief. When Albert died, she was more immediately stoical: she knew that she would have to continue as monarch on her own, but she would mourn him intensely for the rest of her life. In these final pages, where the great sadness of Albert's early death is fully re-created, the personality of the Queen, her great human appeal whatever her limitations, reemerges from the story of her nation.

A scholarly use of available documents, a fine historical sense, a fluent literary style, and an acute sense of character have all combined to produce a compelling volume. One eagerly awaits the further story that Mrs. Woodham-Smith has to tell. □

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## The Gunfathers

**MAFIA, U.S.A. Edited by Nicholas Gage. Illustrated. 397 pages. Playboy Press. $10.**

BY JAMES CONAWAY

Is there anything original left to say about the Mafia? Probably not, but until now there has been no opus devoted to all aspects of the Mafia in America that brings together the talents of many writers considered authorities on the subject, who can offer the widest range of experience and perception. *Mafia, U.S.A.* is such a book, a systematic attempt to establish and make comprehensible the Mafia experience in this country, from its inception in the 1920s through the murder of Crazy Joe Gallo in Umberto's Clam House in New York's Little Italy last April.

Nicholas Gage, author of *The Mafia Is Not an Equal Opportunity Employer* and an investigative reporter whose writing on organized crime has often enlivened the daily pages of the *New York Times*, has compiled a book that is highly readable, if necessarily uneven. He has used excerpts of his own previously published work, as well as


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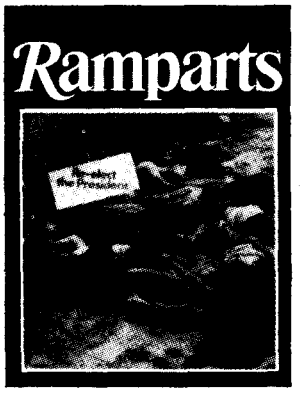
AN ADVERTORIAL

# "New Left publications like *Ramparts* wage a kind of holy war on authority...




True. The trouble is that it has been a war without allies. *Time*, and virtually the rest of the mass media supported another war, the unholiest of this century, in Vietnam. Armed with vast resources, hundreds of reporters, and access to people in power with information, the establishment press failed us and betrayed an obligation, sacred to the press, of doubting and questioning. If this is the free press in action, who needs a government censor? But lest we be accused of taking *Time* out of context, here is the rest of what they said about us in their April issue:

# ...though they are often inaccurate."

*Time* Magazine, April 3, 1972

Accuracy. Our record on the major issues of the day is clear. When *Time* and most of the other magazines in the country were uncritically—but "accurately"—printing government propaganda about Indochina, we were diagramming the steps by which America became bogged down in this disaster. In 1965 we showed how the CIA and Michigan State University got the U.S. involved in Vietnam. In 1967, we demonstrated how the CIA had cynically subverted the National Student Association and a broad range of other domestic institutions. In 1968, we described the CIA's manhunt resulting in the execution of Che Guevara and were the first to publish the Guevara Diaries. In May, 1971 we were the first to tell the story of how the CIA's involvement in the opium trade in Indochina led to an heroin epidemic here at home.

In our ten years as a national magazine, Ramparts has gambled. And it has paid off—for us and for the whole country. It would be accurate to say that we brought muck-raking journalism back to an America that was sadly in need of it, and by so doing advanced the political consciousness of the country. It is a tradition we're proud of; it is a continuing tradition.

Take the last few months for example. In our August issue, we published the startling memoirs of a man who had worked for years as an analyst for the National Security Agency. This story made front page news in papers all across the country and opened a window onto the global mission of the most powerful (and until then, most anonymous) agency in the U.S. espionage network. Our October issue featured a report by David Landau on the Nixon Administration's diplomacy of terror—the secret diplomatic messages to Henry Kissinger which show that the dikes are being systematically destroyed in North Vietnam. Our current issue, November, contains "The Rand Papers." With the help of Anthony Russo and David Landau, we tell the story of "the secret study" of the NLF conducted by the Rand Corporation, on which the U.S. air war has been based.

We will continue to search out the important stories that take place behind the scenes. And we want you to join us. Try this experiment: read *Time* for awhile for an accurate account of what the government says is happening; then read *Ramparts* to find out the truth.

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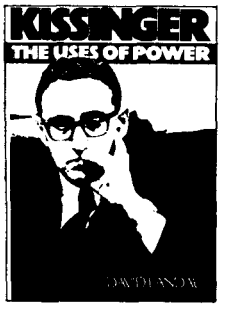
Normally we offer new subscribers a special rate of $6 for ten introductory issues. But we've got a better offer—a year's subscription (regularly $9.50) and this important new work, *Kissinger: The Uses of Power* by ***Ramparts*** contributor David Landau ($5.95 at bookstores)—both yours for $9.50.




*Kissinger: The Uses of Power*, by David Landau is:

"A brilliant analysis in depth of what makes Henry run and the failure of his Vietnam war policy. . . ." Parade, 9/10/72

"Landau will be read and talked about over cocktails in Washington—appreciatively by Democrats, contemptuously by Republicans."—Kirkus, 8/15/72.

Send me your next 12 issues and the hard cover copy of Kissinger. SR

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# When is a woman "crazy"— and who is it who decides?

Not since *Sexual Politics* and *The Female Eunuch* has any book by a leading feminist been as eagerly awaited as WOMEN AND MADNESS — outside as well as inside the Movement. First readers are calling Dr. Phyllis Chesler's angry, fascinating, documented book a certain bestseller:

GLORIA STEINEM: "WOMEN AND MADNESS details the damage that psychiatry has done to women . . . and challenges the definition of madness itself. Like *Sexual Politics*, it breaks new ground: no serious future studies will be able to ignore its theories or its very existence."

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# WOMEN & MADNESS

Dr. Phyllis Chesler

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DOUBLEDAY




pieces by Gay Talese, Peter Maas, Fred J. Cook, and Hank Messick, among others. Some sections of the book, such as the story of Mafia corruption in New Jersey politics, were specially commissioned.

The emergent portrait of the Mafioso is, as might be expected, highly contradictory. Listen to James Torello and Fiore Buccieri, two soldiers in the family of Chicago Mafia boss Sam Giancana, describe the torture of a 350-pound man named William Jackson.

"Torello: 'Jackson was hung up on that meat hook. He was so fucking heavy he bent it. He was on that thing three days before he croaked.'

"Buccieri (giggling): 'You shoulda seen the guy. Like an *elephant* he was, and when Jimmy hit him in the balls with that electric prod . . .'

"Torello: 'He was floppin' around on that hook . . . . We tossed water on him to give a better charge, and he's screamin'.' "

"Trigger Mike" Coppola, an important figure in the New York numbers racket, regularly beat his wife and took great pleasure in assisting the doctor at her four abortions. "Richie the Boot" Boiardo, a flashy bootlegger who wore a diamond-studded belt buckle, had an oven constructed behind his mansion in Livingston, New Jersey, where he regularly burned the bodies of his, and his associates' victims.

There is evidence of conscience and responsibility. Ernie ("The Hawk") Rupolo, a professional killer, had to be "settled down" after each "hit" by his wife, who would wrap cold towels around his head and put him to bed. Bill Bonanno, the subject of Talese's *Honor Thy Father* (a section of which is included in *Mafia, U.S.A.*), appears as an ideal Middle American and family man. "In any showdown with the new generation," Talese writes, "Bill's men would be curiously on the side of the system—the government, the police, and 'law and order.' These men did not want the system to collapse, for if it collapsed, they would topple with it. While they recognized the government as flawed, hypocritical, and undemocratic, with most politicians and the police corrupt to a degree, corruption was at least something that could be understood and dealt with."

That is an unhappy conclusion, if apologetic. The truth is that the Mafia has become more than just an obscene parody of the frontiers of American business, as this book proves. The fact

*James Conaway is the author of a novel,* The Big Easy. *His new book, a biography of Leander Perez, will be published next year.*



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# The Curious Legend of La Dame Blanche

Long, long ago, in the Bordeaux region of France, there lived a handsome young Count.

The estate on which he lived had a truly remarkable vineyard, from which came one of the finest wines in all of France. This wine was treasured throughout the land and was a source of great pride to the young aristocrat.

The people all loved him, for he was very good to them, and the fine wine he produced brought prosperity to them all.

However, they were concerned about one thing.

He had not yet found a wife.

One day, the Count decided to take a holiday, and he journeyed to Morocco. There he met a beautiful Moorish princess with dark mysterious eyes and black silken hair.

And skin the color of dark topaz.

She was, he thought, the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, and he fell hopelessly in love with her. And she with him. And so they were married.

When the news of the beloved Count's marriage to a dark-skinned woman reached the people, they were dismayed. And when he brought her home, they turned their backs on her. Why couldn't he have married one of his own kind?

Despite this, the pair lived happily together until the Count died. Then, his loving wife did something that shocked everyone.

She came to the funeral dressed in white... the color of mourning of her native land.

No one in France had ever worn anything but black for mourning. Oh, she had strange ways, this dark foreign woman.

The bereaved Countess wore nothing but white for the rest of her life, for she had loved her husband very much. So much so that, in his tradition, she continued caring for the vineyard. Which, in turn, continued to produce the superb wine.

She was really a very kind woman, and, like her husband, treated the people well. Slowly, they began to accept her. And they learned to love her as much as they had the Count.

Later, when she died, they all came to her funeral to honor her.

And they came dressed in white.

Now, here is the curious part of the story.

Ever since the death of the Countess, on certain mornings at dawn, a strange white mist drifts across the meadow and surrounds the Chateau.

And the people seeing this phenomenon, say, "La Dame Blanche has returned". So when the white mist appears, the people are happy to be reminded that La Dame Blanche remembers them.

Today, the famous Cruse family occupies the Chateau. And their wine, now called Chateau La Dame Blanche, is still among the finest in all of France. As is every wine that bears the Cruse crescent. Each with its own special story to tell.

Happily, the spirit of La Dame Blanche still prevails.

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Cruse

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that the Mafia flourishes here is itself an indictment of the system and may explain why J. Edgar Hoover refused to admit the existence of a nationally organized crime syndicate until 1959, when it was firmly entrenched. Today the Mafia can be seen as an extreme manifestation of the profit motive taken as an absolute value, just as coercion is the logical extension of the soft sell when the salesman is unregulated, untrammeled by purely moral considerations, and devoted solely to making money. The success of *The Godfather* is due in part to its setting in a kind of businessman's Bonanzaland, in which prevail the traditional values of order, respect, privacy, and, of course, profits. The most valuable contribution of *Mafia, U.S.A.* is the exposition of Mafia muscle in supermarkets, labor unions, Hollywood, and small businesses, and a discussion of the standard Mafia fare—hijacking, bookmaking, policy, dice games, and loan-sharking. The best section of the book deals with the lesser-known victims of the Mafioso—his wife, his sweetheart, and his daughter. Gage observes, "The Mafia is the surest stronghold of male chauvinism in America," and points out that Mafia women are used to form alliances through marriage, as showpieces, property, cooks, and sex objects, but rarely treated as people. Mafia women aren't considered to have any intrinsic value; they are seldom privy to the operation of a system they can escape only with great difficulty.

This overweening "manliness"—from the Sicilian concept of *omertà*—has endured somewhat better than the other half of the hybrid dialectic: silence. The revelations of various Family members—particularly the sensational testimony of Joseph Valachi before the Senate Rackets Committee (Mafia members refer to the Organization as Cosa Nostra, the Outfit, the Arm, the Office)—and the sometimes unpleasant tasks of investigators and journalists have enabled Gage to put together a book with a unifying theme of corruption rather than sensationalism.

The one remaining book on the Mafia will probably never be written: the recollections of some respected don, extracting truth from all the sordid trivia. The principals seem to prove the contention that evil is banal; the heads of families seem congenitally incapable of viewing themselves with any objectivity. In reality, the Mafia represents everything undesirable in our conduct and in our heritage as Americans. Parochialism, bigotry, pride, violence, opportunism—these are not the worst traits only of certain Sicilians and their inheritors but of all human beings. □

# Which the Ocean, Which the Wave?

**JOURNEY BETWEEN TWO CHINAS. By Seymour Topping. Illustrated. 459 pages. Harper & Row. $10.**
**THE MORNING DELUGE: Mao Tsetung and the Chinese Revolution, 1893–1954. By Han Suyin. Illustrated. 571 pages. Little, Brown. $12.95.**

BY ARTHUR PRAGER

The relaxation of restriction on travel to China has produced a beneficial side effect in stemming the flow of memoirs by high- and low-level Sinologists. These experts—a writer qualifies as an expert if he can contrive to visit a country that is closed to other visitors—have published an extraordinary number of books in recent years. Now that visas are more available, expertise is limited to those who have something to say, eliminating the casuals whose claim to fame is a ticket on the Hong Kong–Canton express.

Both Seymour Topping's *Journey Between Two Chinas* and Han Suyin's *The Morning Deluge: Mao Tsetung and the Chinese Revolution, 1893–1954* contain enough new material and enough good writing to raise them above the ordinary. Both authors agree that the Kuomintang government under Chiang Kai-shek was corrupt and brutal; both find Mao Tsetung a remarkable man and a dedicated patriot; and both judge from personal observation that the peasants and workers of China are immeasurably better off than they were under Chiang or the Emperors. Yet what a difference in presentation. Topping's book is intensely personal, somewhat haughty, often subordinating important material to family trivia. Han Suyin's book smells strongly of Politburo pressure, alternating superb passages of historical drama with absurdly childish propaganda.

If ever a man was well suited to write a China book, it is Seymour Topping. While in his twenties and working for the Associated Press, he was the first journalist to meet the Chinese Communist army when it entered Nanking. He was an eyewitness to the destruction of Chiang's armies. He visited Mao in the Yenan caves. He knew Chou En-lai and Huang Hua. His status in China was assured by the fact that his wife was the daughter of the Canadian chargé d'affaires, of a missionary family much respected by Chinese of all political persuasions.

*Arthur Prager, author of* Rascals at Large, *was a U.S. Embassy attaché in Taipei and Hong Kong.*

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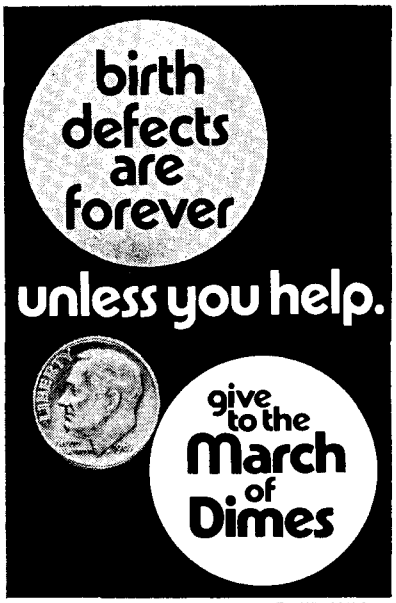


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# What's happening to the WORLD
# An open letter to readers of the Saturday Review.

People have been asking questions about WORLD Magazine—a new magazine about ideas and the arts in a world setting.

They want to know whether we have been able to achieve our stated purpose; namely, to finance our magazine primarily not through outside investors but through our readers. We hoped we could find enough readers who would be willing to take a chance on us by subscribing in advance at full-rate and for long-term.

What happened?

We have now published ten issues. (We appear every other week.)

We began publication on Independence Day with more than 100,000 paid circulation. More than half of our subscriptions were for three years.

Every one of WORLD's readers has subscribed at full rate.

(So far as we know, this is the first time that any magazine has been launched without a single introductory offer or cut-rate subscription.)

Why should full-rate subscriptions make such a big difference in the economics of publishing? Consider the vital statistics.

The average subscription income per copy of WORLD is 40 cents. If we had pursued the conventional introductory offer approach, our per copy subscription income would have been about one-fourth that amount.

Consider the income side. We receive income from subscriptions, newsstand sales, and advertising.

Now consider our per copy costs.

Editorial costs are high. The size of our editorial and reportorial staff, the large number of pages we devote to editorial content, our world round-ups, and color illustrations make for an expensive editorial product.

Now for printing and paper. We prid ourselves on the high quality of our printing (Rumford Press) and on paper (40 lb. process-coated body stock).

Postage is a hefty item. We must include, too, subscription fulfillment cost salaries of the staff, rent, and other gener items of overhead.

A major cost item for magazines is circulation and advertising promotion. C hope was that we could save substantiall on our promotion costs if we could attrac readers who would believe enough in our magazine to talk about it to their friends. So far it is working.

Obviously, most of our per copy cos will be reduced when we spread them ov a larger circulation. That is why we aim t double our readership during the next ye

What about the magazine itself?

The central editorial idea behind WORLD is that the biggest change of our time has happened inside the human min People think of themselves not just as Americans or Russians or Chinese or Japanese, but as members of a human rac now dependent on the same earth life-support system. They have an instinctive sense that their national governments are no longer able to perform their historic function, which is to protect their lives, their values, their property, and even the culture.

And they know, therefore, that new world institutions have to be created to perform these functions.

They know that war in an atomic ag is suicidal holocaust. But they also know is meaningless to decry the horrors of wa without dealing with the basic causes of w

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Similarly, people know that no nation y itself can protect the environment.

And they have a sense that the biggest ssue of all in the years just ahead is not ist the squandering of physical resources ut the squandering of human resources.

WORLD Magazine is concerned with uch issues.

But WORLD is not solemn. A large art of the magazine is devoted to the njoyment of living and to the life of the ind. The editors report on important ooks—whether they are published in New ork or London or Rome or New Delhi or uenos Aires or Manila. They also report n music, art, the motion pictures, drama, avel and photography.

Humor fits easily into the pages of VORLD. Our magazine provides hospitality nd a forum for the nation's leading artoonists. Goodman Ace and Cleveland mory have regular departments which re featured in every issue.

In the field of personal commentary, VORLD is proud to publish the regular olumns of John Ciardi and Leo Rosten.

Buckminster Fuller, the architect, hilosopher and futurist, writes a regular epartment called Geoview. U Thant, ormer Secretary-General of the United lations, writes on peace and politics.

We publish editorials on the human ondition.

Who are WORLD's editors? Hollis Alpert is Managing Editor. Horace Sutton is Editorial Director and also presides over the travel department. Roland Gelatt is International Editor based in London. Richard L. Tobin is Executive Editor and also writes the Communications Section. Midge Decter, formerly Executive Editor of Harper's, is our Literary Editor. Hallowell Bowser and Roger M. Williams are senior editors. Katharine Kuh provides regular coverage of the Fine Arts. Robert Craft, Stravinsky's long time associate, writes on music. Margaret Weiss writes about photography. Most of us have worked together before with genuine affection and respect.

As I said earlier, we hope to attract a substantial number of new readers during this next year. We hope we can find new subscribers who feel WORLD is worth the asking price—$12.00 for one year, $20.00 for two years and $25.00 for three years.

We emphasize the three-year subscription because of the prodigious savings in processing and renewal costs. The savings belong to the readers.

We hope you will feel WORLD is a magazine you will read, enjoy, and respect.

N.C.

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In 1971 Topping, then assistant managing editor of the *New York Times*, made a five-week visit to the mainland and was able to compare the earlier China with the new. He does this in a competent, high-journalistic style, introducing new material, although new material about China is practically nonexistent. The fact that Ambassador John Leighton Stuart was invited to Peking after the Communist victory in 1949 might well, as Topping says, have changed the course of history in Asia. The fact that the State Department refused him permission to go undoubtedly did change it.

*Journey Between Two Chinas* suffers from an identity crisis. Is it a journalistic memoir of an important period in the history of American diplomacy and Chinese upheaval, or is it an autobiography? Topping seems undecided. In the midst of eyewitness chronicling of great events he gives us irrelevant anecdotes about the wife and kids. The fall of Nanking is blurred by his own bucketing about in his jeep. He name-drops, pointing out in a scholarly reminiscence of Vietnam under the French how he and his wife took Graham Greene to his first opium den, how Jack Kennedy broke away from a welcoming group at the airport to seek out Topping and ask his personal advice on some weighty matter.

Nevertheless, Topping was there, watching, writing, sending cables in China, in Vietnam, and everywhere that things were happening. His reminiscences have value in determining the motivations behind the United States' unfortunate Asian policies in the last generation. Perhaps the book should have been two books, one personal and one impersonal. Perhaps the shuttlecock style of human being versus cold camera eye was inevitable.

Han Suyin is a Eurasian born in China, a physician, the widow of a general, and the author of twelve books. (Her novel *A Many-Splendoured Thing*, which dealt with her love affair with a London *Times* correspondent, had the misfortune to become a weepy motion picture that made her the Erich Segal of her day.) She spends a good part of each year in China and has friends and relatives there.

"This book," she says of *The Morning Deluge*, "is not an officially sponsored book." She expresses her gratitude to the Chinese government for allowing her interviews with "ordinary people whose testimony is precious." In the interest of fairness she also spoke with disenchanted renegade Communists and Kuomintang sources, but, alas, she found what they told her to be "fanciful."

The idea for this not officially sponsored biography of Chairman Mao was suggested to Dr. Han by no less a personage than the wife of Chou En-Lai, Mme. Teng Ying-chao, who "compared the people of China to a great ocean and the leaders (such as herself) to the white froth on the wavetops . . . nonexistent without the ocean . . . ." Han Suyin adds that she herself "thought then of Chairman Mao as both child and leader of the Revolution, the nation-man and also the man-ocean, the student of his people as well as their teacher; the one who represents and articulates their genius; the builder of a New China and the destroyer of that worst of all Chinese traditions, submission and obedience to the ruler."

It must have been a comfort to the millions butchered and persecuted during the grotesque Cultural Revolution and the Red Guard atrocities to know that submission and obedience to the ruler were no longer traditional. Han makes no attempt to explain this contradiction nor the dozens of others that appear throughout the book. Mao is presented as an ascetic, not interested in women; yet he divorced his loyal but plain wife for a pretty Shanghai actress, whom he raised to the number-three position of power in the Politburo, after himself and Chou En-lai, although her sole experience in public administration was theatrical. We are told he abhors nepotism and swears to change the ancient Chinese system in which advancement depended on connections rather than talent; yet he placed his brother in charge of the tungsten mines and the first People's Bank in Yeh Ping, virtually controlling the party's finances in 1929. We are told that Mao bore no personal resentment against his enemies; yet he did not hesitate to murder old friends who dared to disagree with his gospels.

Compared with the Kuomintang forces, his army was well disciplined. "Life on Chingkangshan during that winter of 1927–28," Han writes, "was a struggle for survival. The greatest problems were food and clothing for so many men. They could have been obtained in the way usual to marauding bands, by loot and rapine, but this Mao strictly forbade." A paragraph later we are told: "In November the Red Army attacked the County of Chaling and took its county town. Landlords were killed and their stores and goods shared equally with the poor peasants."

In short, Mao disapproved of loot and rapine unless it was selective loot and rapine, with Mao identifying the villains.

Han presents Mao as a kind of Jesus Christ–Abraham Lincoln–George Wash-



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*Mao and Chiang drink to their negotiations in Chungking in 1945.*

ington figure, saintly, benevolent, godlike, and intrinsically good in spite of his fierce dedication to Communism. She develops her thesis to absurdity with anecdotes as apocryphal as any dreamed up by Parson Weems. Mao at seven carries out his first "strike" by refusing to stand up to recite, facing down a severe teacher and wandering in the hills for three days. Teen-aged peasant Mao enrolls himself in an academy for rich boys by impressing the headmaster with his magnetic personality. Mao the young man saves an old woman's grain from a storm before saving his own family's crop. He gives his cloak to a poor man and goes home shivering. He refuses medical aid and sends the doctors to tend his soldiers. He prevails because, Han tells us, "his enemies have fallen one by one, not through his actions but through their own inadequacy."

These fantasies are sprinkled among fine descriptions of the hardships of Mao's military campaigns, fascinating analyses of his intricate political maneuvers, excellent though biased character portraits of party notables, battles, struggles, proud triumphs, and bitter defeats. Stripped of propaganda, this might have been a very fine book. Han tells us that it is Volume One of a two-volume history. It will be interesting to see what she says about the Red Guard in Volume Two.

Both Han and Topping, in spite of their vast ideological differences, are agreed that improved relationships between the United States and China are possible and desirable and that colonialism and interference in, or exploitation of, China by foreign powers are things of the past. Both agree that, whatever happens in Vietnam, the Chinese have little interest in invading Asian nations beyond their borders and the "domino theory" has been an incorrect one. In a dialogue with Chiao Kuan-hua, China's vice minister of foreign affairs, Topping outlines simply the philosophy, shared by Han:

"'In Vietnam, in our relations with China and other countries, we thought we could make changes to fit the American image,' I said. 'Leighton Stuart, the missionary, Kennedy and the others, each thinking that he was doing the moral thing, tried it. If we have learned anything in these last two decades, I hope it is the realization that one people cannot impose change upon another. If there is to be lasting change, it can only come from within a society.'

"'That is the most important thing to understand,' said Chiao Kuan-hua.

"We drove on, each in his own world, but not apart." □

# SHORTER REVIEWS

**GORILLA, MY LOVE. By Toni Cade Bambara. 177 pages. Random House. $5.95.**

These stories, fifteen in all, by a young black woman are among the best portraits of black life to have appeared in some time. Written in a breezy, engaging style that owes a good deal to street dialect, they are concerned primarily with children and manage to incorporate the virtues of such stories—zest and charm—yet avoid most of the sentimental pratfalls. Moreover, they have resonance: their anger is a knife slicing through the entertainment, and it continues to cut when the stories are over. Bambara's subjects—a group of


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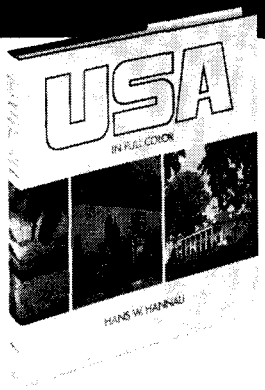


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black children agog and resentful at F.A.O. Schwarz, a mother berated by her children for being "apolitical"—are filled with inherent pathos; but Bambara writes with pride, wit, and a generous portion of human warmth.

**A MINGLED YARN: Chronicle of a Troubled Family. By Beulah Parker. 333 pages. Yale University Press. $7.95.**

No family, however golden and advantaged, is without its problems, but the skeleton rattling in the Carpenter family's closet was a madness that eventually drove the only son to schizophrenia and suicide and one daughter to neurotic alcoholism and early death. The surviving daughter, Amy (all these names are fictional), went through an apparently successful analysis and now, with her friend and fellow psychiatrist Dr. Beulah Parker, has set down the story of how (if not why) this tragedy happened. The story, at once a case history and personal memoir, is filled with the kind of novelistic details that make compelling reading, accented always by the sense of doom hindsight affords. But in the end, inevitably, we are still in the dark. The mother's fantasy-orientation, the father's business drive, the familiar gap in communications—none of these, either individually or cumulatively, really explains why this particular family, and not others, met with such disaster. But the authors have not proposed to deliver answers. They have provided, instead, a highly readable enigma, with many clues and a multitude of questions. ☐

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Answer to Wit Twister, page 83
Brace, Acerb, caber.

**Answer to Literary Crypt No. 1534**

*A man's ignorance is as much his private property, and as precious in his own eyes, as his family Bible.*

Oliver Wendell Holmes



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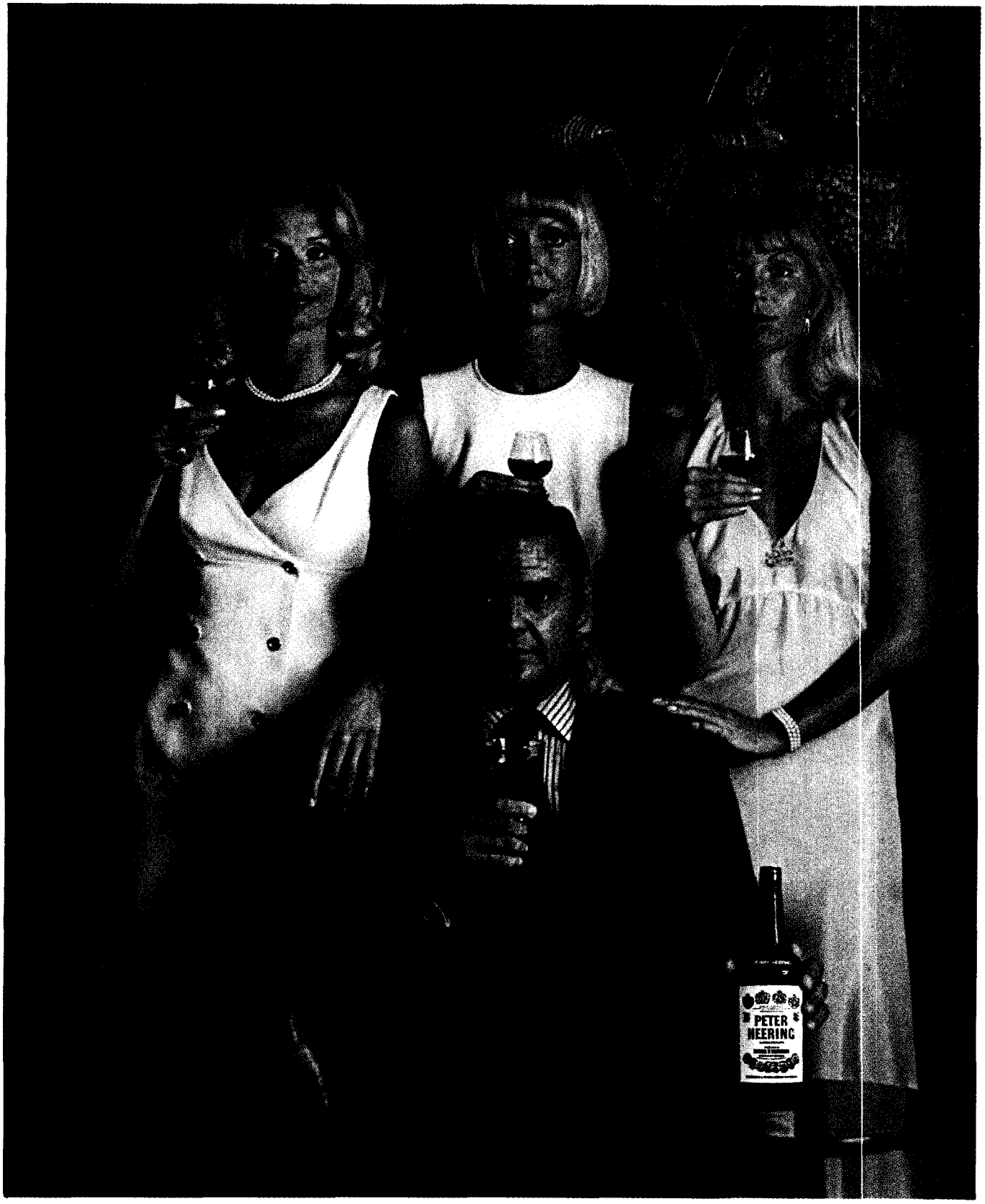


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# Films

## Temptations of St. Fellini

BY THOMAS MEEHAN

As the years have gone by, Federico Fellini has moved steadily further from the compassionate view of life that pervaded such poignant films of his early days as *I Vitelloni, La Strada,* and *The Nights of Cabiria.* Beginning with *La Dolce Vita,* he has seemed increasingly to look at the world through the eyes of an artist as obsessed with human evil and ugliness as, say, Hieronymus Bosch. In fact, Fellini's most recent films strikingly remind one of Bosch's crowded canvases—phantasmagoric visions of a world populated largely by charlatans, evildoers, madmen, and a grotesque procession of cripples, dwarfs, and hideously ugly women of immense weight. His latest film, *Fellini's Roma*—an episodic jumble of fictionalized memories of the director's arrival in Rome as a young man mixed together with semiabstract documentary footage of present-day Rome—is yet another Bosch-like imagining of a city in chaos and decay. A highly personal film, infused with disgust and despair, it is saved from being oppressive by the rich earthiness and ribald humor of the Romans themselves. *Fellini's Roma* is, in fact, hugely funny.

Episodic movies inevitably contain some episodes that are better than the others. But I've rarely before seen an episodic movie in which the quality of the episodes varies so enormously—that is, the good ones are among the best things that Fellini has ever done, and the bad are among the absolute worst. Fortunately, however, the successful episodes outnumber the fiascoes.

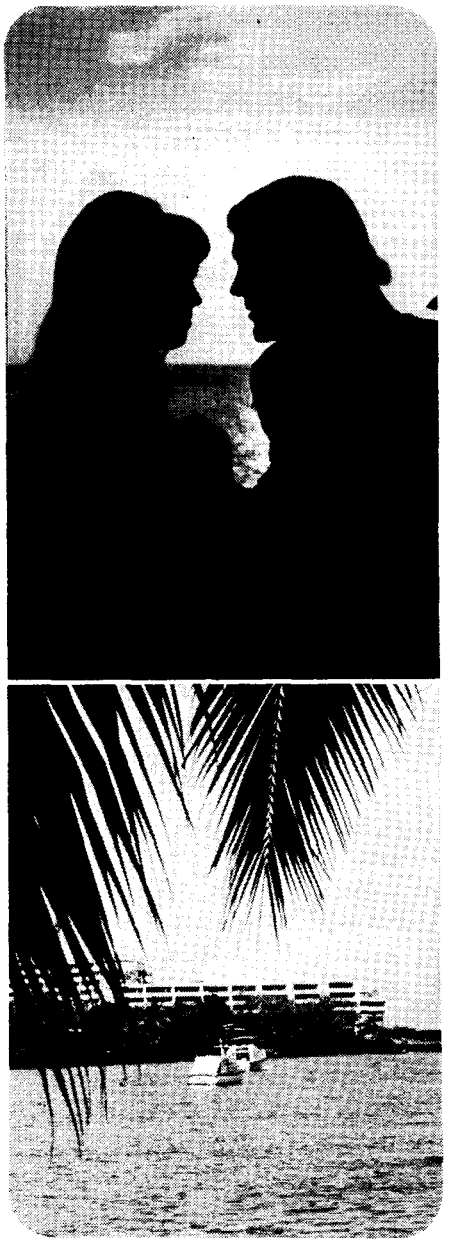
Fellini begins his film with remembered scenes of his childhood in Rimini, the provincial seaside resort city on the Adriatic where he first became aware of the existence of Rome and of his yearning to live there someday. In film after film Fellini returns obsessively to certain crucial themes from his early life, and the opening episode of *Fellini's Roma* is a reworking of scenes that you'll recall from the flashback-to-childhood sequences in *8½* and from fragments of *I Vitelloni.* More than those of any other director, including Truffaut, Fellini's films are intensely autobiographical. The narrator in this film speaks in Italian-accented English and introduces himself as Fellini. As a result, several critics, including Judith Crist and Pauline Kael, have assumed in their reviews that the voice is indeed that of Fellini. Having interviewed Fellini, however, I can assure you that the voice on the soundtrack is not his. Not that he wouldn't have done the narration if his rather high-pitched voice had been suitable for the job; Fellini is no shrinking violet.

From the opening episode in Rimini, Fellini leaps forward in time to present-day Rome and a surrealistic documentary sequence about the nightmare of Sunday evening traffic on the highways leading into the city. He then journeys backward again in time to show us his arrival in Rome shortly before the outbreak of World War II. Settling in Rome, he stays in a slum-district rooming house that is inhabited by a menagerie of freaks who are so outrageously grotesque as to seem excessive, even by Fellini's standards. Next, in one of the film's most evocative and brilliant sequences the youthful Fellini has dinner in an outdoor restaurant that is crowded with a bizarre assemblage of lower-class Romans gorging themselves on huge plates of pasta. (In this sequence and others that take place in the past Fellini is played by a pretty-faced young American actor from Texas named Peter Gonzales. It is perhaps another indication of Fellini's shamelessly inflated ego that he invariably has himself portrayed on the screen by exceedingly handsome actors.)

Time passes; it is 1943. In an episode that is at once the film's funniest and somehow most touching, Fellini recalls a typical Roman vaudeville show of thirty years ago. In just about all of his films Fellini has included moments from vaudeville, but this time he gives us virtually an entire show, and it is wonderful.

For the most part the autobiographical portions of *Fellini's Roma* are vastly superior to the documentary parts. An exception to this rule is the *cinéma-vérité* sequence about Sunday evening traffic: a nightmare of stalled, honking cars being filmed by Fellini's crew in a twilight rainstorm and under a dark purple, El Greco sky.

*Fellini's Roma* may be disconcertingly uneven, but its brilliant parts make the whole very much worth seeing. □

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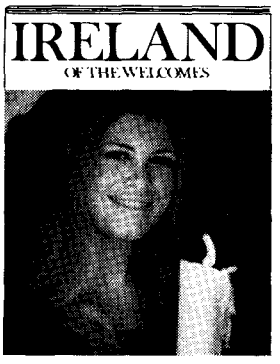


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# Travel

## France's "Desert"

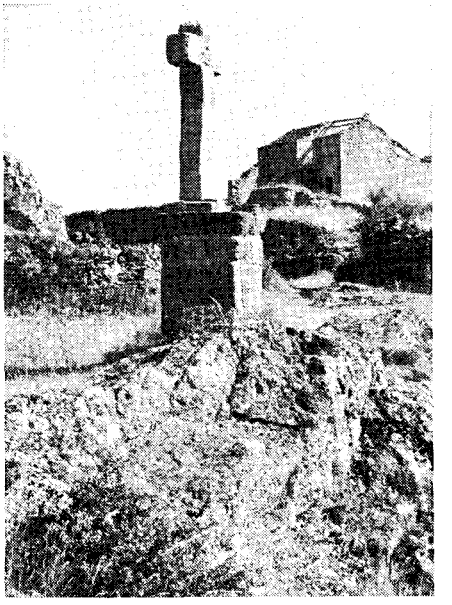
BY EMILY MORISON BECK

In France there are times when a traveler becomes surfeited with magnificent *chateaux*, splendidly manicured parks and *bois*, and towns obviously catering to the American tourist with signs of "Snack" and "Sandwich" chalked on café windows. Even in the countryside every view reveals the handiwork of man—and one begins to yearn for a wilder landscape.

It can be found. A brief flight from Paris, or two days' easy driving, brings one to the heart of French "desert country" in the Southwest—northeast of Toulouse, northwest of Nimes. Here are canyons, or *gorges*, full of extravagant rock formations carved by such rivers as the Tarn, the Jonte, and the Dourbie. Above the precipitous escarpments plunging to the river lie the great calcareous *plateaux* known as the Grands Causses.

In summer the thin air and the burning sun of the Midi, tempered by breezes, make the Causses exhilarating. Rough paths lead through unfenced pastureland bristling with limestone outcroppings, blackberry bushes, and wind-blown scrub. The sky is usually hung with cumulus clouds, the air vibrant with bird song, the grass full of aromatic herbs, wild strawberries, and myriad wild flowers. For the traveler in search of space and solitude, the Causses are his country.

Le Larzac is the largest of the Grands Causses. In the Middle Ages it was ruled first by the Knights Templars, and then, after the Pope and the French king Philip IV disbanded them in 1312, by the Hospitalers. Of the several stations where pilgrims on their way to or from Santiago di Compostela in Spain sought refuge from brigands and storms, only La Couvertoirade remains—a miniature, unrestored Carcassonne, still complete within its walls. For a moment you feel what it was like for a small company, hungry and weary from their journey, to sight the gray stone ramparts rising from the desert plain. Little seems to have changed since their time. No hut dispenses tickets and information at the gate; no nearby inn or café lures tourists. You pass between a round and a square watchtower, paying a small fee to climb up and walk along the ramparts where you can look down on a clutch of stone houses and stables in a network of cobbled lanes.



*During the Middle Ages La Couvertoirade was a haven for pilgrims.*

During the summer months a pleasant young woman named Christiane Pinet weaves handsome textiles on a loom in one of the arched stables. Though most of the houses seem closed or abandoned, she claims that more than fifty *paysans* live there the year round. There are no shops; a grocer and a baker call a few times a week. La Couvertoirade is peaceful and picturesque in summer, but only the hardy can survive the bitter winters of the Causse; Mlle. Pinet admits that she returns to Paris when it turns cold.

The Dourbie and its gorges divide the Causse du Larzac from the Causse Noir, so named for its dense pine forest. High upon it and remote lies Montpellier-le-Vieux, a labyrinth of outlandish rocky crags and narrow ridges above black, bottomless ravines that have swallowed up sheep—and shepherds. It is an eerie lunarscape, feared and shunned by the local people, although carefully marked paths now permit visitors to wander safely.

Nearby, at the lively town of Meyrueis, on the Jonte River, middle-income French families spend their summer holidays. When we arrived in mid-aft-

*Emily Beck is an editor for the Atlantic Monthly Pres.. in Boston.*



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ernoon, the hotels were all full and the single street and its cafés swarmed with vacationers. Although this is not a fashionable part of France, it is popular with those who enjoy walking, climbing, fishing, and boating.

Heading west from Meyrueis, you come suddenly and spectacularly upon the deep and narrow canyon of the Tarn River. This country, with its highland pasture and its stands of spruce, reminds me of Downeast Maine, and it is just as sparsely populated. As you drive through the scattered farm hamlets, you frequently see a Maypole ringed about with a withered garland above a fading sign, *"Honneur à Nôtre Conseiller, M.X."* One Maypole flourished a shirt and the sign, *"Honneur à Nôtre Défait"*—honor to the defeated candidate who lost his shirt in the local election!

There are a number of delightful places to stay in the Grands Causses region, most of them down by the rivers. In Millau you can find an elegant glove shop and groceries stocked with Roquefort and other cheeses and jars of the regional *pâté*, such as *le pâté aux grives* (thrush *pâté*), as well as a first-class hotel, the Commerce. Also under the same management is L'Hotel du Rozier et de la Muse, a starred inn and restaurant several miles north at Le Rozier on the Tarn. La Malene has a fine hotel, the Manoir de Montesquieu, and farther north along the Gorges du Tarn you can find the handsome fifteenth-century Chateau de la Caze. Sainte-Enimie, which leads to the country of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Travels With a Donkey*, provides two modest hotels. The inn at Roquefort-sur-Soulzon offers twenty rooms and superlative fare.

Game birds from the Causses, nourished on wild thyme and juniper berries; trout, crayfish, and eels from the rivers; and chestnuts, truffled *pâté*, and every part of lamb are the regional specialties. A small café on the Causse de Sauveterre, near Point Sublime, not only has a superb view up and down the Gorges du Tarn but serves thick sandwiches made with the chewy country bread and raw ham, omelets, and wild strawberries. Everywhere you can drink a good tangy *vin ordinaire* as well as wines from neighboring regions such as Gaillac and Cahors.

There are also several attractive camping grounds in this part of the Southwest, and, though the distances may be challenging, a determined hiker could plan an interesting and varied walking trip. But he'd best carry his own rucksack rather than be burdened, like Stevenson, with a stubborn donkey for a packhorse. ☐

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## FRASER YOUNG LITERARY CRYPT NO. 1534

*A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 1534 will be found on page 98.*

E VEK'T GMKSOEKRZ GT ET VJRX XGT BOGPECZ BOSBZOCH, EKF ET BOZRGSJT GK XGT SDK ZHZT, ET XGT YEVGAH NGNAZ.

SAGPZO DZKFZAA XSAVZT

## A NOTE TO THE READERS

Norman Cousins, our former associate, has launched a new magazine, *World*. Undoubtedly, a number of *SR* readers will also want to keep up with Mr. Cousins's new publishing venture. An announcement appears in this issue. We at *SR* offer Mr. Cousins and his associates our good wishes and congratulations.

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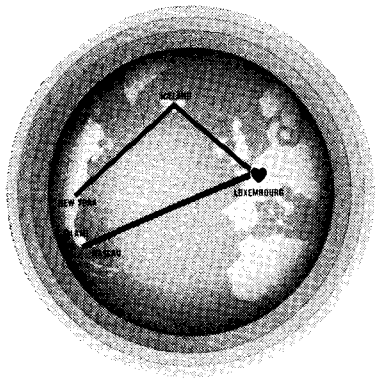


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*(Continued on page 104)*



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(Continued from page 103)

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**ACADEMIC REGISTER, 1973 EDITIONS,** accepting registration from teachers seeking employment, advancement, relocation in college, junior college, private/public school, nationwide, overseas. Also, collateral employment services. Details: The Education Exchange, Box 392SR, Newtown, Connecticut 06470.

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**THE POOL** is surrounded by real and imitation boulders and has every imaginable facility including high and low diving boards, waterfalls, slides, outdoor barbecue, wet bar, and snack bar as well as two unusual cavern-like dressing rooms (the owner has invested over $100,000 in this area alone).

**A RECESSED LIGHTED TENNIS COURT** with dressing rooms is located a short distance from the house and to the south are stables large enough for boarding three horses but which are readily expandable.

**THERE IS ALSO A SMALL HOUSE** consisting of 2 bedrooms and a bath, which could be either servants' quarters or a guest house with certain renovations.

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## PROPERTY FOR SALE

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**EUROPEAN MUSIC TOUR**—July 30th-August 20th. Bayreuth, Salzburg, Vienna, Bregenz, Munich, Lucerne. $740 from Philadelphia. SR Box J-80.

**AMAZON SAFARI CLUB,** RD 2, Elverson, Pennsylvania 19520, offers two week, affordable safaris, Summer 1973. Unconventional adventure in world's largest primitive jungle.

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# Kingsley Double-Crostic

Reg. U.S. Patent Office

By Janet Elliott Cameron

No. 2015

| DEFINITIONS | WORDS |
|---|---|
| A. Uncle of Llew Llaw Gyffes (Welsh legend) | 45 191 245 190 161 87 6 |
| B. Treelike shrub of California having pale blue or white flowers (2 wds.) | 81 230 7 38 18 1 168 182 |
| C. English violist, composer, songwriter: "A Song Remembered" (2 wds.) | 112 202 110 63 86 8 152 82 219 160 |
| D. All-star film about big business: "___ ___ Suite" | 233 59 179 114 196 193 64 76 159 |
| E. City in Pennsylvania, city in Indiana, town in N. Delaware (2 wds.) | 65 77 2 197 199 10 206 14 167 |
| F. Work by Mussorksky: *Pictures at an* ____ | 243 113 178 43 19 118 15 183 3 155 |
| G. Chestnut clam | 216 195 109 39 78 136 20 |
| H. Level of achievement | 83 225 21 240 171 157 189 |
| I. I hope he was more at ease with his invention than I am (2 wds.) | 115 244 192 153 79 154 60 84 156 200 |
| J. Incubus | 44 205 90 119 23 4 180 242 148 |
| K. Member of an Algonquin-speaking tribe | 187 229 5 11 224 150 204 |
| L. Heavily dependent in a close relationship | 22 238 17 141 232 62 220 120 166 |
| M. South wind personified | 239 80 117 61 12 181 |
| N. "The Horrible ____ of Hell!" (MacDonald Clarke) | 13 24 170 194 42 198 85 201 116 67 |
| O. Decree of a Muslim ruler | 34 106 55 234 9 |

| DEFINITIONS | WORDS |
|---|---|
| P. Contrivance used in Eastern countries for raising water (var. sp.) | 129 97 227 135 35 88 25 |
| Q. He is known in the fictional world as an adventurer, traveler, and detective (2 wds.) | 221 91 145 176 123 46 215 105 236 |
| R. Crassness | 139 146 26 184 72 143 107 228 50 |
| S. Old musical instrument, more like a harp than a tuba | 98 164 73 226 128 214 |
| T. Speak up! (3 wds.) | 92 36 211 140 47 124 99 222 163 |
| U. Its capital is Sydney (3 wds.) | 56 122 173 133 16 185 125 137 151 100 27 213 37 |
| V. Later on | 217 241 71 210 158 177 |
| W. Suffering from disillusion | 58 28 66 126 48 104 237 186 134 57 |
| X. Congested (2 wds.) | 108 49 70 208 218 32 93 40 235 |
| Y. City and county seat of Shropshire, England, and Word Z's middle name | 142 147 51 172 94 162 209 132 101 29 |
| Z. U.S. humorist and writer, noted for his Judge Priest stories (2 wds.) | 52 33 121 95 74 103 223 69 165 |
| $Z^1$. Straight jazz (slang; 4 wds.) | 144 203 231 96 174 75 53 169 131 127 188 30 138 111 |
| $Z^2$. Commonly known as the Flickertail State (2 wds.) | 41 175 149 31 54 68 102 89 207 212 130 |

### DIRECTIONS

*Don't let the definitions scare you. If you can guess five or six of these WORDS correctly, you should be able to solve the Double-Crostic . . . . When you've guessed a WORD, fill in the dashes, and also write each letter in its correspondingly numbered square in the diagram. When all the squares are filled in, you will have a quotation from a published work. Dark squares indicate the ends of words. If there is no dark square at the right side of the diagram, the word carries over to the next line . . . . You should be able to see words and phrases begin to form in the diagram on the basis of having just a few letters. Enter the letters you can guess into the diagram and the blanks in the defined WORDS, and you'll find yourself working from WORDS to diagram and back, solving the puzzle . . . . The initial letters of the defined WORDS spell the name of the author and the title of the work from which the quotation was taken. This acrostic feature can be very helpful to the solver.*

| | | 1 B | | 2 E | 3 F | 4 J | 5 K | 6 A | | 7 B | 8 C | 9 O | 10 E | | 11 K | 12 M | 13 N | 14 E | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 F | 16 U | | 17 L | 18 B | | 19 F | 20 G | 21 H | 22 L | 23 J | 24 N | 25 P | 26 R | 27 U | | 28 W | 29 Y | 30 $Z^1$ | 31 $Z^2$ |
| 32 X | 33 Z | 34 O | 35 P | 36 T | 37 U | | 38 B | 39 G | 40 X | 41 $Z^2$ | 42 N | 43 F | 44 J | 45 A | | 46 Q | 47 T | 48 W | 49 X |
| 50 R | | 51 Y | 52 Z | 53 $Z^1$ | 54 $Z^2$ | | 55 O | 56 U | 57 W | | 58 W | 59 D | 60 I | 61 M | 62 L | 63 C | | 64 D | 65 E |
| | 66 W | 67 N | 68 $Z^2$ | | 69 Z | 70 X | 71 V | | 72 R | 73 S | | 74 Z | 75 $Z^1$ | 76 D | 77 E | 78 G | | 79 I | 80 M |
| 81 B | 82 C | 83 H | | 84 I | 85 N | | 86 C | 87 A | 88 P | 89 $Z^2$ | | 90 J | 91 Q | 92 T | 93 X | | 94 Y | 95 Z | 96 $Z^1$ |
| 97 P | | 98 S | 99 T | 100 U | 101 Y | 102 $Z^2$ | 103 Z | 104 W | 105 Q | 106 O | 107 R | 108 X | 109 G | 110 C | 111 $Z^1$ | | 112 C | 113 F | 114 D |
| 115 I | 116 N | 117 M | | 118 F | | 119 J | 120 L | 121 Z | 122 U | | 123 Q | 124 T | | 125 U | 126 W | 127 $Z^1$ | 128 S | 129 P | |
| 130 $Z^2$ | 131 $Z^1$ | 132 Y | 133 U | 134 W | 135 P | | 136 G | 137 U | 138 $Z^1$ | 139 R | | 140 T | 141 L | 142 Y | 143 R | 144 $Z^1$ | 145 Q | | 146 R |
| 147 Y | 148 J | 149 $Z^2$ | 150 K | | 151 U | 152 C | 153 I | | 154 I | 155 F | | 156 I | 157 H | 158 V | 159 D | 160 C | 161 A | 162 Y | 163 T |
| 164 S | 165 Z | 166 L | 167 E | | 168 B | 169 $Z^1$ | 170 N | 171 H | 172 Y | | 173 U | 174 $Z^1$ | 175 $Z^2$ | 176 Q | 177 V | | 178 F | 179 D | 180 J |
| 181 M | 182 B | | 183 F | | 184 R | 185 U | 186 W | 187 K | 188 $Z^1$ | 189 H | 190 A | | 191 A | 192 I | 193 D | 194 N | | 195 G | 196 D |
| 197 E | 198 N | | 199 E | | 200 I | 201 N | 202 C | 203 $Z^1$ | 204 K | 205 J | 206 E | | 207 $Z^2$ | 208 X | | 209 Y | 210 V | 211 T | 212 $Z^2$ |
| 213 U | 214 S | 215 Q | | 216 G | 217 V | 218 X | 219 C | 220 L | 221 Q | 222 T | 223 Z | 224 K | | 225 H | 226 S | 227 P | 228 R | | 229 K |
| 230 B | | 231 $Z^1$ | 232 L | 233 D | 234 O | | 235 X | 236 Q | 237 W | 238 L | 239 M | 240 H | 241 V | 242 J | 243 F | 244 I | 245 A | | |

**Solution of this week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 98 of this issue.**



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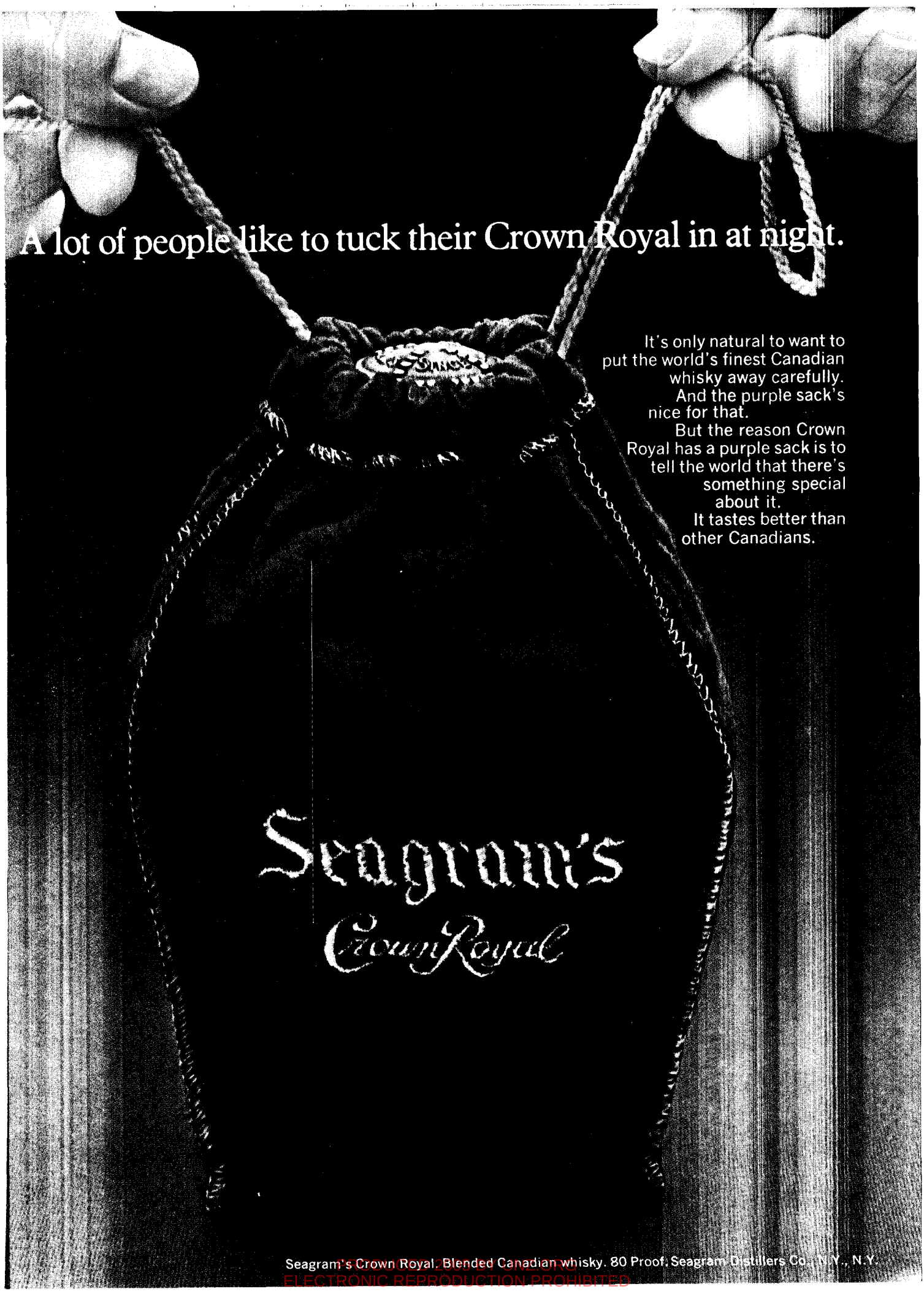
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Seagram's Crown Royal. Blended Canadian whisky. 80 Proof. Seagram Distillers Co., N.Y., N.Y.
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# La Grande Liqueur Francaise

After coffee enjoy

# Benedictine

The spectacular way to end a dinner and begin an evening

WILE NEW YORK 86 proof

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